

Qur'anic Reflections

*Insights into the objectives
of the Qur'anic verses*

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Part 3/3

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Contents

Surat Al-Ankabut (The Spider)	3
Surat Ar-Rum (The Romans)	7
Surat Luqman	10
Surat As-Sajdah (Prostration)	15
Surat Al-Ahzab (The allied parties).....	18
Surat Saba' (Sheba).....	21
Surat Fatir (The Originator).....	23
Surat Ya-Seen	24
Surat As-Saffat (The ones ranged in ranks)	26
Surat Sad	27
Surat Az-Zumar (The Hordes)	30
Surat Ghafir (The Forgiver)	34
Surat Fussilat (Expounded)	43
Surat Ash-Shura (Counsel)	44
Surat Az-Zukhruf (Decoration)	45
Surat Ad-Dukhan (Smoke)	47
Surat Al-Jathiyah (Kneeling).....	48
Surat Al-Ahqaf (The Sand Dunes).....	48
Surat Muhammad	51
Surat Al-Fath (The Conquest)	53
Surat Al-Hujuraat (The Apartments)	57
Surat Qaf (The Witnessed Day)	60
Surat Adh-Dhariyat (The Winnowers).....	62
Surat At-Tur (The Mount).....	64
Surat An-Najm (The Star)	65
Surat Al-Qamar (The Moon)	67
Surat Ar-Rahman (The All-Merciful)	69
Surat Al-Waqi'ah (The Event).....	70
Surat Al-Hadid (Iron)	71
Surahs of the Twenty-Eighth Part.....	76
Surahs of the Twenty-Ninth Part.....	91
Surahs of the Thirtieth Part.....	100

Surat Al-Ankabut (The Spider)

Surat Al-Ankabut is Makkan. It was revealed after Surat Ar-Rum. It comes after Surat Al-Qasas in the Holy Qur'an. It consists of 69 ayahs.

The objective of the Surah is made clear from the very beginning in what can be translated as, **“Alif-Lâm-Mîm. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] 2. Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe,” and will not be tested...” (TMQ, 1-2:29).** O believers, strive to overcome trials and have fortitude and self-control. Thus, it is the Surah of trials.

These trials are an inevitable part of a Muslim's life. They are a *sunnah* of the universe ordained by Allah (SWT) upon earth. Some may ask, ‘Why are we sent these trials? Would it not have been better for us to live a peaceful life, praying, fasting and worshipping Allah (SWT) with no trials or tragedies?’ Those who ask these questions have not understood the Allah's (SWT) Wisdom and Intention in creating this world. This world was created as a trial for the hereafter and without these trials, it would not be possible to rank people in [the different levels of] paradise. It would not be possible to distinguish between those who deserve the highest *ferdaws* (the highest level of paradise), those who deserve the lowest level of paradise, and those who do not deserve to enter paradise at all until they pass through some punishment. Accordingly, it is a necessity for the Justice of Allah (SWT) to put His Worshipers through trials in order to distinguish the bad from the good.

Sunnah of the universe

As such, the beginning of the Surah is what can be translated as, **“Alif-Lâm-Mîm. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings.] 2. Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: “We believe,” and will not be tested...” (TMQ, 1-2:29).** Is it reasonable to think you are believers just because you say, “We believe” with your lips? Even if you are sincere in saying so, there must be a test, **“and will not be tested...”**

The rule is that believers are put through afflictions so do not assume that they occur to you alone. In fact, the third ayah states that these ordeals are a *sunnah* of the universe in what can be translated as, **“And We indeed tested those who were before them” (TMQ, 3:29).** Why do You do this Allah (SWT)? The answer comes in the same ayah in what can be translated as, **“And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to test)” (TMQ, 3:29).** The tests reveal the true believer from those who allege belief. Accordingly, ayah eleven reveals the same meaning in what can be translated as, **“Verily, Allah knows those who believe, and verily, He knows the hypocrites [i.e. Allah will test the people with good and hard days to discriminate the good from the wicked, although Allah knows all that before putting them to test]” (TMQ, 11:29).**

Here, a question presents itself: Would not Allah (SWT) know as He is the Knower of the entire Unknown, who will succeed in this trial and endure and who will fall and go astray? Then why the need for affliction? The answer is that Allah (SWT) sends these trials so that you humans know, that they can be a proof against you on the Day of Judgment.

It would have been sufficient for Allah (SWT) to tell you on the Day of Judgment; “I know that if you had been in such a situation you would have done such and such. Go and enter hellfire.” But Allah (SWT) with His Wisdom, Mercy and Justice sends us these trials in this life and reckons your actual actions in the hereafter as explained in what can be translated as, **“And Allah will certainly make (it) known (the truth of) those who are true, and will certainly make (it) known (the falsehood of) those who are liars, (although Allah knows all that before putting them to test)”** (TMQ, 3:29).

Do not suppose, Brother in Islam, that this world is effortless and devoid of troubles, even if you are a believer. Faith will not relieve you from the trials of this world and the person is afflicted according to his or her faith. This is why Allah (SWT) says in Surat Al-Ankabut that if you crave for Allah’s rewards, you should have patience and strive to overcome these trials and tests. Do so until you meet Allah (SWT) and He will reward you because meeting Allah (SWT) is near and inevitable as is pointed out in what can be translated as, **“Whoever hopes for the Meeting with Allah, then Allah’s Term is surely coming and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Knower”** (TMQ, 5:29). It should not come to mind amidst all this talk about trials that Allah (SWT) needs your striving. Your striving and endurance are for you alone. Allah (SWT) is self-sufficient of our deeds, our worship and of the whole world. We are the insignificant and need Him for everything. Allah (SWT) states what can be translated as **“And whosoever strives, he strives only for himself. Verily, Allah stands not in need of any of the ‘Alamin (mankind, jinn, and all that exists)”** (TMQ, 6:29).

One of the most crucial trials the Surah discusses is to be tried in our religion (creed), such as when a believer is harmed with the intention to make him deviate from Allah’s (SWT) religion. The Surah stresses that this is harm, not punishment. However, when judgment is deficient and the scales become unbalanced, the weak believer assumes that people’s harm to him is the worst kind of punishment. For this reason, the Surah emphasizes that this assumption is erroneous, for only Allah (SWT) can punish as stated in what can be translated as, **“Of mankind are some who say: “We believe in Allah.” But if they are made to suffer for the sake of Allah, they consider the trial of mankind as Allah’s punishment; and if victory comes from your Lord, (the hypocrites) will say: “Verily we were with you (helping you).” Is not Allah Best Aware of what is in the breasts of the ‘Alamin (mankind and jinn)”** (TMQ, 10:29)

The toughest trials

The ayahs in the Surah continue to discuss the same theme. Trials reveal people’s beliefs, test what may be hidden in their hearts and expose the true from the false. For this reason, it mentions another trial, that of parents who push their son to move away from obeying Allah (SWT), either out of fear for their child or out of arrogance towards Allah’s (SWT) religion. Allah (SWT) states what can be translated as, **“And We have enjoined on man to be good and dutiful to his parents; but if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return and I shall tell you what you used to do”** (TMQ, 8:29). This is a difficult and demanding trial. Will the believer treat his parents righteously despite the fact that they are disbelievers ?

Means of being saved from trials

One of the nice things about the Surah is that it starts off by stating that trials are a part of people's lives and that they are extremely difficult. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested"** (TMQ, 2:29). Nevertheless, it ends with a wonderful ayah that shows us that trials are in fact easy Allah (SWT) will guide and help us to overcome them if we strive against them. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (i.e. Allah's religion - Islâmic Monotheism). And verily, Allah is with the Muhsinun (good doers)"** (TMQ, 69:29). This ayah was revealed in Makkah when *jihad* (striving for the cause of Islam with the sword) had not yet been decreed. Thus, this ayah refers to striving against both one's self and trials. As if it says, 'Strive against yourselves, and succeed, then you will guarantee victory over the internal and external enemy.'

The leaders of *Mujahedeen* (fighters for the cause of Allah)

The Surah then relates the story of how the Prophets Nuh (AS) (Noah), Ibrahim (AS) (Abraham), Lut (AS) (Lot), Shu'aib (AS) and Musa (AS) (Moses) faced trials and strived against them. Looking at the story of Prophet Nuh (AS) that was revealed in the Surah, we find that it is the only Surah that mentions the duration of his *da'wa* (call to Allah's (SWT) religion) which is nine hundred and fifty years. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"and he stayed among them a thousand years less fifty years [inviting them to believe in the Oneness of Allah (Monotheism), and discard the false gods and other deities]"** (TMQ, 14:29). This shows the believers that trials are inevitable and even the Prophets did not avoid them.

When we know the extent of Prophet Nuh's (AS) perseverance and patience it helps us to endure the trials we will face, which are certainly much less than that of the Prophet. Another trial is discussed after that of Prophet Nuh (AS) is that of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his patience with his people when they said, "Kill him or burn him." Then Allah (SWT) saved him from the fire. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Verily, in this are indeed signs for a people who believe"** (TMQ, 24:29). This proves to us in a practical way that Allah (SWT) assists us in confronting these trials. Nevertheless, we are demanded to go on striving against them as stated in what can be translated as, **"As for those who strive hard in Us (Our Cause), We will surely guide them to Our Paths (i.e. Allah's religion - Islâmic Monotheism). And verily, Allah is with the Muhsinûn (good doers)"** (TMQ, 69:29).

Why Al-Ankabut?

What remains is to discuss the reason for naming the Surah Al-Ankabut. When Allah (SWT) sets a similitude through the example of a creature, the objective of the Surah is then based on the example given and the analogy made. For example, Surah An-Naml is the Surah of superiority of civilizations with the ant colony as its symbol. Ant colonies are exceptionally organized and embody the features of a civilization. The purpose of Surat An-Nahl is gratitude for blessings. It shows us how these creatures follow Allah's (SWT) commands and produce delicious and beneficial honey that cures people. This proves to us that following the commands of *Shariah* (Islamic doctrine) will bring out the light of guidance, which is a cure for people just like honey. The question of why this Surah discussing trials was named after the spider remains.

Similar to its threads

The reason for this name is that trials are similar to the threads of a spider's web. The nature of trials is that they are intertwined and interconnected. It is not possible to distinguish between one trial and another. They are many and complicated, covering all aspects of a person's life. Yet they are fragile and weak, if one asks for Allah's (SWT) help in facing them. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"But verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider's house - if they but knew"** (TMQ, 41:29).

Typically, humans rush quickly to search for a savior when they are put to test through trials. Unfortunately, they usually ask for help from other than Allah (SWT) and turn to other humans. This is why Allah (SWT) in the Surah tells us that if turn to humans for help order to escape from the trials, you will be as one who sought refuge in a spider's web, a weak, fragile house that does not protect or shelter its occupants. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"The likeness of those who take (false deities as) Auliya' (protectors, helpers) other than Allah is the likeness of a spider who builds (for itself) a house; but verily, the frailest (weakest) of houses is the spider's house - if they but knew"** (TMQ, 41:29). The meaning here is that one of the toughest and most dangerous trials is to satisfy people at the expense of your religion or that you seek help or rely on anyone other than Allah (SWT).

The weakest of houses

The spider's web is fragile due to the weakness of its threads and it is also weak from a social standpoint. After the male fertilizes the female, the female kills the male and throws him out of the web. Then, when the spider's offspring become mature, they, in turn, kill the mother and throw her out of the web. What a strange home, the worst it may exist.

The Surah gives the example of the spider to show us that the spider's crowded threads, though complicated they may appear, are similar to trials in the fact that they are both fragile. The example demonstrates that seeking help from anyone other than Allah (SWT) is exactly the same as seeking refuge in the spider's web, a place indeed physically and socially fragile. *Sobhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah) for choosing this name for the Surah of trials to warn people against imitating this insect in its life and acts.

Surat Ar-Rum (The Romans)

Surat Ar-Rum is a Makkan. It was revealed after Surat Al-Inshiqaq. It comes after Surat Al-Ankabut in the order of the Qu'ran. It is composed of 60 ayahs.

Allah's signs are clear and sure

The phrase “and among His Signs is,” is more frequently used in this Surah than in any other Surah in the Qur'an. This in itself shows the objective of the Surah : ‘Allah's signs are clear and sure, so how do still you disbelieve?’ Thus, the Surah takes us around the universe all over Allah's (SWT) Dominion and reminds us that Allah's (SWT) signs are clear enough to boost our faith in His Greatness and Power. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect. And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge” (TMQ, 21-22:30).**

The ayahs make clear in a wonderful way that (one is lead to deduce) Allah (SWT) has two books in His Dominion: the visual book, that is the universe and the book to be read, namely the Qur'an. The wonder of both books is that they are closely related: the meaning of each of them lead to that of the other. For example, Surat Ar-Rum is a Surah to be read, yet it invites you to look at Allah's (SWT) visual book to find evidence of Allah (SWT). The more you observe the universe and contemplate it, the more it drives you to Allah's (SWT) written book. Glory to the One who made for all kinds of people, illiterate and educated, Arabs and non-Arabs, old and young, a book to read and find evidence of Allah (SWT).

Of his signs

The ayahs ensue in a consecutive display of Allah's (SWT) clear signs in the universe. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“and among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge. And among His Signs is your sleep by night and by day, and your seeking of His Bounty . . .” (TMQ, 22-23:30), “And among His Signs is that He shows you the lightning, for fear and for hope, and He sends down water (rain) from the sky, and therewith revives the earth after its death . . .” (TMQ, 24:30), “And among His Signs is that the heaven and the earth stand by His Command . . .” (TMQ, 25:30).**

This Surah consists of 60 ayahs; please verify for yourself how many times the word ‘Signs’ occurs. After you read this Surah go out to the natural world and ponder Allah's (SWT) creation for five minutes. Who created this universe and excelled in creating it? Who made these awesome signs? Who restored husbands' relationships with their wives and created between them love and compassion?

Ayah 46 takes us to another of Allah's (SWT) signs. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“and among His Signs is this, that He sends the winds as glad tidings, giving you a taste of His Mercy (i.e. rain) . . .” (TMQ, 46:30) and another, “Allah is He Who sends the winds, so that they raise clouds, and spread them along the sky as He wills, and then break them into fragments, until you see rain drops come forth from their midst!”**

(TMQ, 48:30). Even in the creation of the human being Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Allah is He Who created you in (a state of) weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave (you) weakness and grey hair,”** (TMQ, 54:30). It is as if this Surah guides you to Allah’s (SWT) visual book. It tells you, ‘look at Allah’s (SWT) signs and how they surround you from all sides, how can the ungrateful disbeliever not believe them? How can some people doubt Allah’s (SWT) power?’

The Romans: a historical sign

The question remains why this Surah was named Surat Ar-Rum. The reply is because at the beginning of the Surah Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“The Romans have been defeated,”** (TMQ, 2:30). Yet what is the relation between Ar-rum and the Surah? Why wasn’t this Surah named the Surah of signs?

The naming of this Surah has historical significance, for during the time of the Prophet (SAWS) there was a war between the Romans and the Persians. The Persians were overwhelmingly victorious while the Romans were badly beaten. The ayahs in the Surah inform the believers that the Romans will triumph over the Persians in an odd number of years (i.e. from three to nine years).

Allah (SWT) illustrates in the Surah His astounding signs [of creation] in the universe. He addresses those who disbelieve and are stubborn stating that if you see these signs and disbelieve, here is a factual sign that will happen before your eyes, specifically the victory of the Romans over the Persians in less than ten years. This ayah is directed towards us in modern times just as it was directed towards our predecessors. How did the Prophet (SAWS) who lived in Makkah know that the Romans would eventually triumph over their enemies?

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Alif-Lâm-Mîm. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur’an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allah, (before the defeat of the Romans by the Persians, and after the defeat of the Persians by the Romans). And on that Day, the believers (i.e. Muslims) will rejoice (at the victory given by Allah to the Romans against the Persians). With the help of Allah. He helps whom He wills, and He is the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful.”** (TMQ, 1-5:30).

The prediction in the Qur’an was precisely fulfilled after nine years and the Surah was named Surat Ar-Rum to draw the attention of disbelievers to these factual signs since they did not believe the visual signs in the universe. In fact, there is another sign about this incident that our predecessors did not understand or notice, one that strengthens our faith in this revealed book and its remarkable signs.

The Surah says that the battle happened in the lowest earth, [another meaning of the Arabic word ‘adna’ is lowest as well as nearest]. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious”** (TMQ, 2-3:30). Modern science tells us that the location of the battle in the Dead Sea basin is the lowest point on earth. This is a sign that cannot be denied by anyone in our modern times (please refer to the books dealing

with the Scientific Truths and Miracles in the Qur'an) for more details). What rebuttal do disbelievers of ancient or modern times have after hearing these ayahs?

An economic sign

Allah (SWT) also explains to us another sign in the Surah, an economic sign that we see in the world today. Not a scientific sign but an economic one. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And that which you give in gift (to others), in order that it may increase (your wealth by expecting to get a better one in return) from other people’s property, has no increase with Allah; but that which you give in Zakat (sadaqa - charity etc.), seeking Allah’s Countenance, then those, they shall have manifold increase” (TMQ, 39:30).** The meaning here is that interest does not increase money but in fact decreases it. The modern economic theory proves that the best way to have a stable economy is to have the interest rate set at 0%, i.e. cancel all interest. Modern economic theory also proves that *Zakat* (charity) is the best method for development.

What brings this reference about interest in the middle of the Surah of signs? *Sobhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah), it is as if the Surah tells all people over the ages to look at the signs of Allah (SWT) in every field: in history, geology and economics. *Zakat* is a developmental approach, while interest is a means to decrease money and make the economy suffer [through inflation].

Before ending, there are several comments that must be referred to:

The apparent and the hidden signs

At the beginning of the Surah Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“They know only the outside appearance of the life of the world (i.e. the matters of their livelihood, like irrigating or sowing or reaping, etc.), and they are heedless of the Hereafter” (TMQ, 7:30).** This ayah comes in a Surah full of the signs of Allah (SWT) to tell us that there are many more signs and proofs of Allah (SWT) that we do not see or understand the wisdom behind them. As a matter of fact such signs are not always what they seem to be.

What was apparent about the Romans is that they were defeated and broken. Yet, the eventual outcome was victory over the enemy in a very short time. It is apparent that interest increases money and *Zakat* decreases it but the Surah proves otherwise. Interest eventually leads to economic ruin, contrary to *Zakat*, which leads to development. It is as if the meaning directed to the believers is to have trust in Allah’s (SWT) promise and confidence in His Wisdom and Running of the universe.

Surat Luqman

Surat Luqman is a Makkan. It was revealed after Surat As-Saffaat and comes after Surat Ar-Rum in the Qur'an. It consists of 34 ayahs.

The Surah of Child Rearing

The purpose of the Surah can be derived from its name, which shows us Luqman's rearing of his son and advising him as mentioned in the Surah. It is the Surah of child rearing that conveys wonderful methods to raise them according to Allah's (SWT) Decree. It comprehensively discusses child rearing from a religious and worldly standpoint. This child rearing covers the following areas:

- *Tawheed* (Monotheism) of Allah (SWT)
- Being dutiful to one's parents
- The importance of worship and reactivity
- Understanding the realities of the world
- Good behavior and manners
- Planning one's life

Subhan Allah, all this is present in the Surah and in only 34 verses? This is a Surah that must be taught in our schools. Our children must read and memorize this Surah to grow up following the guidelines that Luqman used with his son. Not only that, parents must learn it before their children so that they learn from the Qur'anic instruction, the instruction of Luqman and the method of religious and worldly child rearing.

The Themes of Luqman's Child Rearing

Not associating partners with Allah (SWT)

This is a theme evident in the entire Surah, because the first principle our children should be raised on is believing in Allah (SWT) as an only One Lord and thus the monotheism of Allah and not associating partners with Him. How can we do this? We must show them Allah's (SWT) Dominion in the universe and take them on outings and trips to see natural vistas and to see for themselves Allah's (SWT) flawlessness in His Creations. We must get them to know about the greatness of The Creator (SWT) from the wonder of His Creations.

Observe how Luqman instructs his son in what can be translated as, “**. . .O my son! Join not in worship others with Allah. Verily joining others in worship with Allah is a great Zulm (wrong) indeed,**” (TMQ, 13:31). He begins by severely cautioning his son from the notion of *shirk* (polytheism), then after two ayahs moves on to a practical lesson as stated in what can be translated as, “**“O my son! If it be (anything) equal to the weight of a grain of mustard seed, and though it be in a rock, or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth. Verily, Allah is Subtle (in bringing out that grain), Well-Aware (of its place),”** (TMQ, 16:31). The marvel of this ayah makes it particularly suitable as an example that young children can understand. At the same time, the ayah expresses a significant meaning for adults also and conveys the Omnipotence, Extent and Knowledge of Allah (SWT).

Being dutiful to one's parents and informing children of their parents' munificence, so that they understand the meaning of gratitude, thanking Allah (SWT) and their parents.

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents. His mother bore him in weakness and hardship upon weakness and hardship, and his weaning is in two years - give thanks to Me and to your parents. Unto Me is the final destination,”** (TMQ, 14:31). Even though the matter at hand is being dutiful to one's parents, there is a reminder of not committing polytheism even if it is for the sake of obeying one's parents. Thus, the Qur'an teaches us that the two matters should not collide with one another. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not . . .”** (TMQ, 15:31). It also teaches us to balance duty towards parents and abandon polytheism in what can be translated as, **“but behave with them in the world kindly . . .”** (TMQ, 15:31).

The importance of worshipping and being positive in life.

Allah (SWT) states what can be translated as, **“O my son! Aqim-As-Salât (perform As-Salât), enjoin (on people) Al-Ma'ruf - (Islâmic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad) . . .”** (TMQ, 17:31). Child rearing is not only securing food, drink, residence, clothes and medicine for children, which are home management matters, but also raising children up on worshipping Allah (SWT). This does not mean child rearing is limited to teaching children how to pray, as many parents would suppose, but we must sow in their hearts the need to be positive and active in their relation with people of their community, commanding good and forbidding wrong and guiding people to the right path.

Understanding the realities of the world

Some parents raise their children to be wasteful, excessively spending and depending on their parents' money. They assume that this is securing for their children all their needs for living in this world. In fact, what is needed is to inform children of the realities of the world and its changing nature. The world will not be eternal for the parents and the children must learn to depend on themselves. Allah (SWT) relates what Luqman says in the ayah that can be translated as, **“ . . .and bear with patience whatever befalls you. Verily, these are some of the important commandments (ordered by Allah with no exemption) . . .”** (TMQ, 17:31). Specifically, if children are raised up to be proactive as instructed in the previous ayah that can be translated as, **“ . . . enjoin (on people) Al-Ma'ruf - (Islâmic Monotheism and all that is good), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. disbelief in the Oneness of Allah, polytheism of all kinds and all that is evil and bad) . . .”** (TMQ, 17:31) then the matter needs much patience, because being active and calling for Allah (SWT) is a path full of problems and difficulties.

Good behavior and manners

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And turn not your face away from men with pride, nor walk in insolence through the earth. Verily, Allah likes not any arrogant boaster. “ * “And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking, and lower your**

voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the braying of the Asses” (TMQ, 18-19:31). It is vital to deal with people politely and courteously down to the smallest details, such as in walking and talking. A person should neither raise his cheek in arrogance, nor demean himself, but he should strike a middle path in walking (walking in a humble and modest way). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking” (TMQ, 19:31).** He should not raise his voice more than is necessary for one to be heard.

Defining a goal in life and planning for the future

One of the wonders of this Surah is that it also covers this theme in child rearing. This is evident from Allah’s saying which can be translated as, **“And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking” (TMQ, 19:31).** This ayah completes the series of manners and good behaviors that Allah (SWT) discusses in the Surah, as it means one should walk around with dignity, without arrogance or haughtiness. **“And be moderate (or show no insolence) in your walking”** may also mean that you must have a purpose and goal with each step, so that you don’t live a life with no purpose [another meaning for the Arabic word *aqsid* is purpose, so the ayah could read as, “And have purpose in your walking”].

Have a compassionate manner for child rearing

Notice how many instructions are covered in tremendous parental love and feeling. When I read these ayahs it is as if I feel Luqman, the gentle man, instructing his son gently and telling him before each teaching, “My son, my son.” The Surah tells parents to befriend their children and win them over before instructing them. Brother Muslim, talk to them about your experiences and mistakes in life. Use friendship to advise them before using stronger Do’s and Don’ts. This makes the Surah truly remarkable as a practical guide in so far as the duty of child rearing is concerned.

Allah’s knowledge and power

Since monotheism is the primary focus of child rearing, we see that the Surah focuses on monotheism to which we should draw our children’s attention while teaching them. Looking at the beginning of ayah eleven, we see that it concentrates on this theme, especially when Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“He has created the heavens without any pillars that you see, and has set on the earth firm mountains lest it should shake with you . . .” (TMQ, 10:31).** This vision presents to fathers an important method to sow monotheism in the hearts of children. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“This is the creation of Allah. So show Me that which those (whom you worship) besides Him have created . . .” (TMQ, 11:31).** Many other ayahs carry the same message when Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“See you not (O men) that Allah has subjected for you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, and has completed and perfected His Graces upon you, (both) apparent (i.e. Islâmic Monotheism, and the lawful pleasures of this world, including health, good looks, etc.) and hidden [i.e. One’s Faith in Allah (of Islâmic Monotheism) . . .” (TMQ, 20:31).** Until we get to a remarkable example of Allah’s (SWT) Knowledge Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And if all the trees on the earth were pens and the sea (were ink wherewith to write), with seven seas behind it to add to its (supply), yet the Words of Allah would not be exhausted. Verily, Allah is All Mighty, All-Wise,” (TMQ, 27:31).** This ayah is an

extraordinary example of using nature, to instruct them about Allah's (SWT) Knowledge and His span over all creation.

Not blindly following

The Surah concentrates on the dangers of raising children upon blindly following their parents' belief without understanding it. On one hand, it shows that love and kindness must be the major characteristics of child-parent relationship, so that the child is convinced with the parents' teachings. On the other hand, it is prohibited for children to follow their parents' religion [if it is not Islam]. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And when it is said to them: 'Follow that which Allah has sent down', they say: 'Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers (following).' . . ."** (TMQ, 21:31).

The ayahs clearly show that both the father and the son are responsible for their actions in the life of this world on the Day of Judgment. The father will not benefit his son at all as stated by Allah (SWT) when He says in what can be translated as, **"O mankind! Be afraid of your Lord (by keeping your duty to Him and avoiding all evil), and fear a Day when no father can avail aught for his son, nor a son avail aught for his father . . ."** (TMQ, 33:31). Thus, it is crucial to raise them up on proper *iman* (faith), correct *a'akidah* (principles) and good traits.

Ending the Surah: Allah's (SWT) knowledge

Just as the Surah starts with monotheism, its ending concentrates on Allah's (SWT) Knowledge and Power, and the incapability of the created in knowing anything from His Unseen. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Verily Allah, with Him (Alone) is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, Allah is All-Knower, All-Aware (of things)"** (TMQ, 34:31). There are five hidden spheres of information no one but Allah (SWT) knows: the time of the Day of Judgment, the time of rainfall, the type of fetus before its creation, future events and where each person will die and be buried. O Muslims! Raise your children up to have faith and belief in Allah (SWT) and His monotheism in this way.

And we gave Luqman wisdom

One of the nice things about this Surah is that it primarily focuses on wisdom, for the Surah starts with Allah's (SWT) words that can be translated as, **"Alif-Lâm-Mîm. [These letters are one of the miracles of the Qur'an, and none but Allah (Alone) knows their meanings]. These are Verses of the Wise Book (the Qur'an)." (TMQ, 1-2:31).**

Even when the Surah *debases* those who block the way to Allah (SWT), He says what can be translated as, **"And of mankind is he who purchases idle talks (i.e. music, singing, etc.) to mislead (men) from the Path of Allah without knowledge"** (TMQ, 6:31). Consequently, mindless chatter is the opposite of wisdom. Not only that, in the first ayah Luqman is mentioned when Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And indeed We bestowed upon Luqman Al-Hikmah (wisdom and religious understanding) saying: 'Give thanks to Allah.'" (TMQ, 12:31).** It is as if Luqman's advice to his son is the cream of his wisdom and experience in life and he is passing it on to those who follow.

Finally, I would like to ask you the following questions: Will you take Luqman and his wisdom as an example in rearing your children? Have you made note down of the points guidelines through which you will raise your children? We ask Allah (*SWT*) to help us rearing our children according to His Path (Methodology), Qur'an and *Shariah*.

Surat As-Sajdah (Prostration)

At this point, we come to Surat As-Sajdah, whose core idea is: The Prostration. The Surah is that of submission to Allah (SWT) and for this reason, the name it is given is the symbol of submission and resignation to the will of Allah (SWT): Prostration. The Prophet (SAWS) used to read this Surah in the Fajr (dawn) prayer every Friday- which is both a feast day and a holiday for Muslims- so that he may begin the blessed day with submission and humility to Allah (SWT).

Why not be one of them?

In the Surah, we see Allah's (SWT) commendation of the pious who submit to Him. This can be found in the ayah that contains the prostration (orders the Muslim to prostrate to Allah as soon as he reaches it while reciting the Qur'an) : **“Only those believe in Our Ayat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.), those who, when reminded of them, fall in prostration, and glorify the Praises of their Lord, and they are not proud (arrogant).” (TMQ, 32:15).**

Therefore, when you read this ayah, do quickly prostrate to Allah (SWT) so that you may be one of those who submit to Him, and whom you should take as models. In reading the Surah further, another picture is painted in what can be translated as: **“Their sides forsake their beds, to invoke their Lord in fear and hope, and they spend (in charity in Allah's Cause) out of what We have bestowed on them.” (TMQ, 32:16).** Even when they go to bed, their bodies refuse sleep. Notice the brilliance of the expression, **“Their sides forsake their beds...” (TMQ, 32:16).** Too many people, the bed and sleep represent rest and relaxation; however, those who submit to Allah (SWT) refuse sleep due to the extent of their love of worship, their fear of Hellfire, and their longing for Paradise.

Note how Allah (SWT) honoured those who submitted to Him from the Israelites in this world even before the Hereafter in what can be translated as:

“And We made from among them (Children of Israel), leaders, giving guidance under Our Command, when they were patient and used to believe with certainty in Our Ayat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.).” (TMQ, 32:24).

Beware of being from them

Whoever does not submit to Allah (SWT) by his own will in this life, will submit to Him in the Hereafter by force, without reward, and with painful torment. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And if you only could see when the *Mujrimun* (criminals, disbelievers, polytheists, sinners) shall hang their heads before their Lord (saying): “Our Lord! We have now seen and heard, so send us back (to the world), that we will do righteous good deeds. Verily! We now believe with certainty.”” (TMQ, 32:12).**

Another ayah shows us how submission to Allah in the Hereafter will not help those who submit only then in what can be translated as:

“Say: “On the Day of Al-Fath (Decision), no profit will it be to those who disbelieve if they (then) believe! Nor will they be granted a respite.”” (TMQ, 32:29).

However, Allah (SWT) gives time to those who are proud and arrogant until their return to Him. He sends upon them misfortunes and distress in this life in the hope that they may submit to Him. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And verily, We will make them taste of the near torment (i.e. the torment in the life of this world, i.e. disasters, calamities, etc.) prior to the supreme torment (in the Hereafter), in order that they may (repent and) return (i.e. accept Islam).”** (TMQ, 32:21).

It is as if the Surah presents to you both examples and asks you: To which group do you belong in what has been translated to mean:

“Is then he who is a believer like him who is a *Fasiq* (disbeliever and disobedient to Allah)? Not equal are they.” (TMQ, 32:18).

Death is a true fact

Due to the fact that it is a Surah of submission the mention of death appears so that the heedless may wake up from their oblivion and submit to Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Say: “The angel of death, who is set over you, will take your souls. Then you shall be brought to your Lord.”“** (TMQ, 32:11).

The Prophet (SAWS) used to read it in the Fajr prayer every Friday, for the sake of its gentle and humble meanings, in order to renew his intention of humility and submission to Allah (SWT) in this life before standing in front of Him in the Hereafter.

If you feel lassitude in your worship to Allah (SWT) and wish to increase your vivacity and renew your submission to Him, do read Surat As-Sajdah and ask Allah (SWT) to aid you in that respect.

Surat Al-Ahzab (The Allied Parties), Surat Saba' (Sheba), Surat Fatir (The Originator), Surat Ya-Seen, Surat As-Saffat (The ones ranged in ranks), Surat Sad

In our Qur'anic reflections, we come to the 22nd and 23rd chapters of the Qur'an. These chapters consist of six Surahs: Al-Ahzab, Saba', Fatir, Ya-Sin, As-Saffat, and Sad. The Surahs have one theme and one core idea, namely, surrendering to Allah (SWT).

The Meaning of Islam

After having read 22 chapters of Allah's (SWT) book (the Qur'an) and the main features of the Qur'an have become clear to us, we must ask ourselves a question: How is our relationship with Allah (SWT)? What is the title of our religion? What does the word Islam even mean?

If we check in a dictionary, we find that the word Islam means submission and surrender to Allah (SWT). This is what can be understood when Allah (SWT) says about Prophet Ibrahim (SAWS) in what can be translated as: **"When his Lord said to him, 'Submit (i.e. be a Muslim)!' He said, 'I have submitted myself (as a Muslim) to the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists).'**" (TMQ, 2:131). That is, I surrendered to the Lord of the 'Alamin and submitted myself to Allah (SWT).

Therefore, these six Surahs ask, is it not high time you surrender and submit yourself to Allah (SWT)? It is noteworthy to mention that the Qur'an ask you to surrender to Allah (SWT) after it has presented to you Allah's (SWT) methodology and discipline in the first 22 chapters of the Qur'an. It's as if to say, after you have understood the wisdom and grandeur of Allah's (SWT) revelation and the principle laws of Islam and after you have felt the brilliance in the ayahs and signs of Allah's (SWT) omnipotence, surrender to Him. Surrender, even if you are dissatisfied with just a small part of a situation, or if you are not fully comfortable with a certain matter. Surrender, because the title of your religion is "surrender and submission."

Core ideas of surrender and submission:

These six Surahs revolve around one core idea, which is that of surrender and submission to Allah (SWT) in all aspects of life:

Surat Al-Ahzab: Surrendering to Allah (SWT) in difficult situations.

Surat Saba': Surrendering to Allah (SWT) is the path to the survival of civilizations.

Surat Fatir: Surrendering to Allah (SWT) is the path to honour.

Surat Ya-Sin: Surrendering to Allah (SWT) through persisting on the mission of calling people forth to Islam, even if one has given up hope in the mission being effective.

Surat As-Saffat: Surrendering to Allah (SWT) even if you don't understand the wisdom behind Allah's (SWT) orders.

Surat Sad: Surrendering to Allah (SWT) and returning to righteousness without stubbornness.

Here we understand the reason behind for these Surahs appearing in the 22nd chapter, after the presentation of Allah's (SWT) methodology and discipline. By this time, we grasp the meaning and realize the title of our religion and what Allah (SWT) wants from us. Thus, it is about time we surrendered to Him.

We emphasize that this is a humble, small-scale work on our part, with the intention to facilitate the reading of the Qur'an for young Muslims and to increase their interaction with it. We do not claim that this is all that can be said on the topic. No doubt there are those who are more knowledgeable in the interpretation of the meanings of the Qur'an; however, there should also be those who try to relate the meanings of the Surahs with one another and understand Allah's (SWT) purpose in them, since the Qur'an has endless depth.

After this brief introduction, let us explore together the Surahs of surrender and submission to Allah (SWT).

= Surat Al-Ahzab (The allied parties) =

Surrendering to Allah in difficult situations:

This Surah is, by the way, one of the best Surahs in the Qur'an to portray the different difficult situations that people may go through. The incident of Al-Ahzab (which is also called the Conquest of the Trench) was itself a very difficult situation. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"When they came upon you from above you and from below you, and when the eyes grew wild and the hearts reached the throats, and you were harboring doubts about Allah. There, the believers were tried and shaken with a mighty shaking."** (TMQ, 33:10-11).

Through all of the ayahs, the Surah focuses on obedience to Allah (SWT), surrender and submission to Him in these situations.

Social situations:

Further on, another difficult situation is mentioned, which is that of Zaid's divorce from Zaynab bint Jahsh (RA) and the Prophet's (SAWS) subsequent marriage to her: **"So when Zaid had accomplished his desire from her (i.e. divorced her), We gave her to you in marriage..."** (TMQ, 33:37).

After that comes the prohibition of adoption and the abolition of this custom that was so ingrained in the Arab spirit. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Call them (adopted sons) by (the names of) their fathers..."** (TMQ, 33:5). This decree began with the Prophet (SAWS) when his adoption of Zaid became null and Zaid's name returned to Zaid ibn Haritha rather than Zaid ibn Muhammad. This was quite embarrassing for both Zaid (RA) and the Prophet (SAWS). The ayah, therefore, comments upon this situation in what can be translated as, **"There is no blame on the Prophet (SAWS) in that which Allah has made legal for him."** (TMQ, 33:38).

Another difficult situation is presented: the Prophet's (SAWS) wives who ask for more money. This is not greed or a desire for luxury on their part, but because the economic situation during their time was extremely hard. However, Allah (SWT) wished to test them with a challenging ordeal because they were the Mothers of the believers. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"O Prophet (Muhammad SAW)! Say to your wives: 'If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner (divorce). 'But if you desire Allah and His**

Messenger, and the home of the Hereafter, then verily, Allah has prepared for *Al-Muhsinat* (good-doers) amongst you an enormous reward.”“ (TMQ, 33:28-29)

Your Hijab is the symbol of your ultimate surrender

Hence, we see that the Surah includes many difficult and/or embarrassing situations that the Muslim may experience. It brings us to a situation that is enormously difficult for women but, at the same time, tests the degree to which they will surrender to Allah's (SWT) commands – the hijab. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close round them when they go abroad” (TMQ, 33:59)**

This ayah, along with the 31st ayah of Surat An-Nur, mentions meticulously the details of a Muslim woman's hijab. In Surat An-Nur, the details of how to cover the upper body are clarified: **“...and to draw their veils over their bosoms...”** In Surat Al-Ahzab, the ayah discusses the coverings of the lower part of the body: **“... cast their outer garments over their persons (when abroad)...”** Will you, O Muslim sister, surrender to Allah (SWT) and accept His command of the hijab? Or will you be among those who say, I am not yet convinced of the concept of hijab...

Surrender without hesitation

If someone still insists upon not carrying out the orders of Allah (SWT) until he understands the wisdom behind them, then read what this important ayah says about the concept of submitting surrender to Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision.” (TMQ, 33:36)**

So it is inadmissible for anyone to protest and refuse any command given by Allah (SWT) and say that he needs to be convinced first of the concept behind this command. Young men and women, surrender to Allah (SWT), for the ayahs in the Qur'an, throughout 20 of its chapters, have made clear the wisdom of Allah (SWT) and His plan for His creations and the wonder in the laws He has placed (which proves that our religion does not ask that people follow blindly nor does it disable minds from thinking on their own). It is high time you surrender.

It's as if the meaning is that Allah (SWT) wants from us to worship Him through two kinds of commands. On the one hand, those whose reason and wisdom are known and clear, such as the prohibition of meat not slaughtered and alcohol, which the Muslim fulfills wholeheartedly and strengthens his faith in Allah's (SWT) prudence in His laws. On the other hand, those whose reasons are not mentioned but Allah (SWT) wishes us to fulfill them whether or not we understand the wisdom behind them. This is so that He may test our unconditional and unwavering submission to Him.

Obedience of Allah in the Surah

Since the core idea of the Surah is obedience to Allah (SWT) and surrender to His orders, we see that the word “obedience” is mentioned in the Surah seven times and honesty with Allah (SWT) is mentioned eight times. Not only that, but the very first ayah in the Surah orders the Prophet (SAWS) to be sincerely and wholeheartedly obedient to Allah (SWT) and no one else.

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“O Prophet! Fear Allah, and hearken not to the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites” (TMQ, 33:1)**

There are many other ayahs that carry the same meaning as Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And obey not (the behests) of the Unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and heed not their annoyances, but put thy Trust in Allah...” (TMQ, 33:48)**

The fourth ayah focuses on devoting one’s obedience to Allah (*SWT*) alone when Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Allah has not made for any man two hearts in his (one) body...”** The fate of those who obey humans and not Allah (*SWT*) will be like those who say what can be translated as, **“And they would say: “Our Lord! We obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they misled us as to the (right) Path.” (TMQ, 33:67)**

The Surah confirms that this matter does not apply only to the Prophet (*SAWS*), but to all of the Prophets of Allah (*SWT*) when Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And remember We took from the Prophets their covenant: As (We did) from thee: from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary: We took from them a solemn covenant:” (TMQ, 33:7)**

The surrender of the Heavens and the Earth

The Surah ends with on a gentle note; Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; - He was indeed unjust and foolish; - “(TMQ, 33:72)**

There are two types of ways to surrender to Allah (*SWT*). One can either submit to Allah (*SWT*) by one’s own choice and freewill, or can be a servant to Allah (*SWT*) without having to choose. The first type is the one the heavens and the earth feared, knowing how uneasy is to carry the moral responsibility and perform duties. For this reason, they chose the second type of surrender, which is that of submission to Allah (*SWT*) without being given the choice of fulfilling Allah’s commands.

As for man, he has carried this moral responsibility – **“...He was indeed unjust and foolish...”** However, the ayah does not mean that man is unjust and foolish because he carries this responsibility but he will be so if he does not surrender to Allah (*SWT*) after having taken it.

For this reason, the conclusion of Surat Al-Ahzab is: Surrender to Allah (*SWT*) and know that He has entrusted you with a tremendous responsibility, one feared by even the grandest of Allah’s (*SWT*) creations. They preferred surrendering to Allah (*SWT*) without choice.

The reason behind the Surah’s title

As for the Surah’s name and how it came about, we must go back to the Battle of the Trench, in which Al-Ahzab (the allied parties) surrounded Madinah from every corner and every side. What was the Muslims’ reaction in this difficult situation? Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“When the Believers saw the Confederate forces, they said: “This is what Allah and his Messenger had promised us, and Allah and His Messenger told us what was true.” And it only added to their faith and their zeal in obedience. “ (TMQ, 33:22)**

Do you see how the surrender to Allah (*SWT*) is constantly repeated throughout this Surah?

However, there is another reason for the Surah's name other than the Ahzab (the allied parties) that appeared outside of Madinah. Internally, Madinah had been divided into groups: The group of hypocrites, the group of those who hesitated or were afraid and the third group which we must not forget – the group of women who brought victory to Islam. There are many ayahs in the Surah, which talk about this particular group, such as ayah 35 which can be translated as, **“...Verily, the Muslims (those who submit to Allah in Islam) men and women, the believers men and women (who believe in Islamic Monotheism)...”** There is also the group of believers who trusted have trust in Allah (*SWT*) and who had a wonderful testimony from Allah (*SWT* were highly praised by Him) for their submission as Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Among the Believers are men who have been true to their covenant with Allah: of them some have completed their vow (to the extreme), and some (still) wait: but they have never changed (their determination) in the least.”** (TMQ, 33:23).

Reconcile the groups...to establish civilization

The Surah is named so for the many groups found both outside and inside of Madinah. There is no doubt that reforming the groups inside of Medina and being victorious over them is, by far, much harder than winning over the groups outside of the city. Allah (*SWT*) finished off the former group by sending them a strong wind as mentioned in the ayah that can be translated as, **“...We sent against them a hurricane and forces that ye saw not...”** (TMQ, 33:9). As for the groups inside, if they are reformed, our nation (of Islam) will be one of strong civilization, similar to that of Saba', which is discussed in the Surah that follows this one. It is as if the relationship between the two Surahs is summarized in the following statement: “O groups inside, surrender to Allah (*SWT*) and fuse together, for this is the way to preserve civilizations”.

= Surat Saba' (Sheba) =

The surrender of civilizations to Allah

Surat Saba', like Surat Al-Naml, is a Surah that discusses the issue of success in civilizations; it continues the meaning started by Surat Al-Naml. Surat Al-Naml focuses on working with the building blocks of civilization, from education to technological development to management, whereas Surat Saba' asks those who wish to build a culture and a nation: What is the basis of this culture? What is the foundation? The objective of the Surah is the importance and the need for of faith in modern civilization.

The Surah discusses two contrasting types of civilizations: One that believes in Allah (*SWT*) and surrenders to Him, that of Dawud (*AS*) and Solaiman (*AS*) and one that disobeys Allah (*SWT*) and refuses His path, that is of Saba'.

The Surah's order in the Qur'an after Surat Al-Ahzab emphasizes, as mentioned earlier, that reformation of the groups inside with faith is the path to building a strong civilization.

Two civilizations on the scale

The first type, which is that of a believing and trusting civilization, can be found in Prophet Dawud (AS), who was granted power and authority by Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And indeed We bestowed grace on Dawud (David) from Us (saying): ‘O you mountains. Glorify (Allah) with him! And you birds (also)! And We made the iron soft for him.’”** (TMQ, 34:10). When Prophet Dawud (AS) surrendered to Allah (SWT) and worshiped Him wholly and completely, Allah (SWT) made even the iron obedient to him and made the entire universe under his command. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And to Solomon (We subjected) the wind, its morning (stride from sunrise till midnoon) was a month’s (journey), and its afternoon (stride from the midday decline of the sun to sunset) was a month’s (journey i.e. in one day he could travel two months’ (journey). And We caused a fount of (molten) brass to flow for him...”** (34:12). Notice the words “glorify,” “soften,” and “to flow,” for they are all indications of how Allah (SWT) put the entire universe under the command of this believing civilization. In Surat Sad, one of several Surahs, which discuss the topic of surrendering to Allah (SWT), we see how Allah (SWT) strengthened Prophet Dawud’s (AS) rule. Allah (SWT) states what can be translated as, **“And (so did) the birds assembled: all obedient to him [Dawud (David)] [i.e. they came and glorified Allah’s Praises along with him]. We made his kingdom strong...”** (TMQ, 38:19-20).

The second type of civilization is one that refuses to surrender to Allah (SWT) and is punished and annihilated for such a refusal. This Surah is named after such a people so that it may be a lesson to be learned by others. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Indeed there was for Saba’ (Sheba) a sign in their dwelling-place - two gardens on the right hand and on the left; (and it was said to them:) ‘Eat of the provision of your Lord, and be grateful to Him.’ A fair land and an Oft-Forgiving Lord! But they turned away (from the obedience of Allah), so We sent against them *Sail Al-’Arim* (flood released from the dam), and We converted their two gardens into gardens producing bitter bad fruit, and tamarisks, and some few lote-trees. Like this We requited them because they were ungrateful disbelievers. And never do We requite in such a way except those who are ungrateful (disbelievers).”** (TMQ, 34:15-17).

The Jinn in the Surah

Along with these two civilizations, the Surah mentions the jinn and how they were completely submitted and devoted to Prophet Solaiman (AS) and his people. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“...and there were jinn that worked in front of him, by the Leave of his Lord. And whosoever of them turned aside from Our Command, We shall cause him to taste of the torment of the blazing Fire.”** (TMQ, 34:12). This particular civilization was not granted any power or authority or knowledge, as the ayah proves in what can be translated as, **“Then when We decreed death for him [Solaiman (Solomon)], nothing informed them (jinn) of his death except a little worm of the earth, which kept (slowly) gnawing away at his stick. So when he fell down, the jinn saw clearly that if they had known the Unseen, they would not have stayed in the humiliating torment.”** (TMQ, 34:14).

The jinn worked diligently, fearing Solaiman (AS), who observed them and their actions. They did not know however, that Prophet Solaiman (AS) died leaning on his chair. They didn’t know anything about this matter until the worms of the earth gnawed at Solaiman’s (AS) stick. This is just a simple incident, yet it exposes this civilization, which was obedient and submissive without knowledge.

A universal method

After presenting both types of civilizations, the Surah generalizes the concept and points out that the civilizations' disbelief in Allah (SWT) brings its downfall in what can be translated as, **“And those before them belied; these have not received even a tenth of what We had granted to those (of old); yet they belied My Messengers. Then how (terrible) was My denial (punishment)!”** (TMQ, 34:45). After mentioning the ancient nations, the Surah points out that there had been nations ten times stronger and more powerful than Quraish, yet their civilizations had been wiped out because the concept mentioned above had applied on them.

Therefore, guidance is offered for anyone wishing to establish a civilization or build a nation. For those of you with plans to build the glory of Islam –you should know it, and keep it in mind as you work on your mission. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Say (to them O Muhammad SAW): ‘I exhort you to one (thing) only: that you stand up for Allah’s sake in pairs and singly, and reflect (within yourselves the life history of the Prophet SAW): there is no madness in your companion (Muhammad SAW)...’”** (TMQ, 34:46).

= Surat Fatir (The Originator) =

Surrender is the way to glory

Surat Fatir continues the discussion of surrendering to Allah (SWT). We saw that, in Surat Saba', surrendering to Allah (SWT) is the way to preserve and maintain civilizations. Surat Fatir takes the message a little further. It states that surrendering to Allah (SWT) does more than that; it is the way to honor and prestige in this life. Some people think that surrendering to Allah (SWT) and submitting to Him is a disgrace and a discredit to them; however, the Surah makes clear that true honor and glory can be achieved only through Allah (SWT) in what can be translated as, **“Whosoever desires honor, (power and glory), then to Allah belong all honor, power and glory [and one can get honor, power and glory only by obeying and worshipping Allah (Alone)]. To Him ascend (all) the goodly words, and the righteous deeds exalt it (i.e. the goodly words are not accepted by Allah unless and until they are followed by good deeds)...”** (TMQ, 35:10).

How can you not surrender?

The Surah takes the message even further. It asks why we do not surrender to Allah (SWT) and we are in dire need of Him and He is rich and does not need us or anyone in the world? Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“O mankind! it is you who stand in need of Allah. But Allah is Rich (Free of all needs), Worthy of all praise. If He willed, He could destroy you and bring about a new creation. And that is not hard for Allah.”** (TMQ, 35:15-17).

The Surah began by mentioning the angels and indicating that despite the greatness in their creation and their power, they submit to Allah (SWT) and surrender to Him in all of their affairs. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the (only) Originator [or the (Only) Creator] of the heavens and the earth, Who made the angels messengers with wings, two or three or four...”** (TMQ, 35:1).

The Originator of the Heavens and the Earth

Why is the Surah's title one of Allah's 99 names, The Originator?

Surat Fatir shows us Allah's (*SWT*) wonders in the universe so that we may know Him well and truly believe that all glory and honor belongs to Him and surrender to Him and submit to no one but Him. Why, then, does the Surah focus on this particular name – The Originator?

A word synonymous with "Originator" is "Creator." In the Arabic language, when the phrase "something is originated" (*Fatara*) is said, it means to have been split into two halves. The Ayahs in the Surah focus on Allah's (*SWT*) greatness through the principle of duality found in the universe. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as: **"All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the (only) Originator [or the (Only) Creator] of the heavens and the earth..."** (TMQ, 35:1).

"Whatever of mercy (i.e. of good), Allah may grant to mankind, none can withhold it; and whatever He may withhold, none can grant it thereafter..." (TMQ, 35:2).
"And the two seas (kinds of water) are not alike: this is palatable, sweet and pleasant to drink, and that is salt and bitter..." (TMQ, 35:12).

"See you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruits of various colors, and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colors and (others) very black. And likewise of men and *Ad-Dawabb* [moving (living) creatures, beasts], and cattle, are of various colors..." (TMQ, 35:27-28).

Other ayahs mention contrasting pairs in what can be translated as, **"Not alike are the blind (disbelievers in Islamic Monotheism) and the seeing (believers in Islamic Monotheism). Nor are (alike) darkness (disbelief) and light (Belief in Islamic Monotheism). Nor are (alike) the shade and the sun's heat. Nor are (alike) the living (i.e. the believers) and the dead (i.e. the disbelievers)..."** (TMQ, 35: 19-22).

It's as if it is saying to us: Who has the ability to run the universe with these contrasting pairs other than Allah (*SWT*)? Surrender to Him and submit to His greatness.

The Surah demonstrates to us, through most of its ayahs, Allah's (*SWT*) power and ability in the universe so that we may know Him well and trust that all honor belongs to Him. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **"Verily! Allah grasps the heavens and the earth lest they should move away from their places, and if they were to move away from their places, there is not one that could grasp them after Him..."** (TMQ, 35:41).

= Surat Ya-Seen =

This Surah makes clear a type of submission that the Muslim should perform and this is submission to Allah (*SWT*) while calling people to Allah (*SWT*). This is done by insisting on His claim, whether people accept guidance or not, because this is a kind of devotion and worship through which you can be devout and close to Allah (*SWT*).

Therefore the Surah gives two examples of people: those with lively, kind hearts and those hard-hearted people. Since the person doesn't know what's in the hearts of people he cannot

know who will accept and follow guidance and who will grow obstinate and give himself up to arrogance. Thus he has to call all people to Allah (SWT) no matter the results may be.

The reason behind sending down this Surah:

The Surah starts with those who refuse guidance from Allah (SWT) in what can be translated as, **“And it is equal to them whether you have warned them or you have not warned them, they do not believe.” (TMQ, 36: 10).** Then it quickly shifts to those who accept and follow guidance in what can be translated as, **“Surely you only warn him who closely follows the Remembrance and is apprehensive of The All-Merciful in the Unseen. So give him the good tidings of forgiveness and an honorable reward.” (TMQ, 36: 11).**

The Surah pictures both categories of people, a fact which explains the reason why it was sent down to Prophet Mohamed (SAWS) before *Hijra* (emigration from Makkah to Madinah). At this time, Islam stopped spreading and Muslims started to feel desperate.

In this respect, we find many Ayahs (verses) encouraging Prophet Mohamed (SAWS) and strengthening his will to go on with his call in what can be translated as, **“Surely you are indeed of the Emissaries. On a straight Path. (This is) the successive sending down of The Ever-Mighty, The Ever-Merciful, That you may warn a people; In no way were their fathers warned, so they are heedless.” (TMQ, 36: 3-6).**

The Surah raises the question: Will you obey Allah (SWT) and surrender to Him and go on with your call? Only Allah (SWT) knows what hearts conceal, therefore you should go on with your call.

An example model for of submission:

The Surah mentions the famous story of the city, to which Allah (SWT) sent three Messengers in what can be translated as, **“And strike for them a similitude: the companions (i.e., the inhabitants) of the town, as the Emissaries came to it, As We sent to them two (men). Yet they cried them lies, so We reinforced them with a third. Then they said, “Surely we are (sent) to you as Emissaries.” (TMQ, 36: 13-14).**

Allah (SWT) has sent three Messengers to this city but only one man felt responsible for this Religion and had a great attitude as stated in what can be translated as, **“And (there) came from the remotest part of the city a man going speedily. He said, “O my people, closely follow the Emissaries! Closely follow (the ones) who ask of you no reward, and they are rightly guided. And for what should I not worship Him who originated me, and to Him you will be returned?” (TMQ, 36: 20-22).**

It is the story of a man who did not stand still without calling people for Allah (SWT) with the excuse that Allah (SWT) sends Messengers to the city. He insisted on going on to convince his people even though they did not listen to the Messengers sent to them and who were much better than he. Thus we see that the story relates directly to the main pivot of the Surah; you should never feel desperate while calling people to Allah (SWT).

Ayahs of creation and their ends:

The Surah focuses on death and resurrection, reminding us all (Muslims, disbelievers, obedient, and disobedient) that we will die one day; that is why we should go on calling any person to the right path because Allah (SWT) might guide this person to His path before death. This aspect is closely connected to the ayahs that focused on the ends of things; reminding disbelievers of death which is the end of rejection and the end of the whole creation in what can be translated as, **“And the sun runs to a repository for it; that is the determining of The Ever-Mighty, the Ever-Knowing. And the moon, We have determined it by phases, till it becomes again (Literally: goes back) like the old date-stalk.”** (TMQ, 36: 38-39). This means that there is an end for both the sun and the moon as well as for all living creatures.

Read Ya Seen for your dead people

In addition, it clarifies the meaning of Prophet Mohamed’s (SAWS) Hadith: “Read Ya Seen for your dead people.” This does not mean that the Surah should be read in graves, as many people do. Nevertheless it should be read for the living, even those who are about to die because since they are still breathing, they should be guided. It is really a beautiful and important meaning to all those calling for Allah (SWT).

= Surat As-Saffat (The ones ranged in ranks) =

This Surah sheds light on one single meaning and this is surrendering to Allah’s (SWT) orders even if you don’t understand the meaning behind it. Therefore it gives a fine example of Ibrahim (AS)(Abraham) who was asked to slaughter his son Isma’il (AS)(Ishmael). He accepted the order without hesitation or inquiries about the reason behind such an order. It is as if the Surah says: you Muslims will receive some orders, which you will not understand the reason behind. Therefore you have to follow Ibrahim (AS) in fulfilling such divine orders.

The submission of the father and the son:

In the story of Ibrahim (AS) there is a complete submission to Allah, Almighty. Ibrahim (AS) left his people and emigrated for the sake of Allah (SWT) and said what can be translated as, **“And he said, “Surely I am going to my Lord, soon He will guide me.”**(TMQ, 37: 99). The Surah then pictures his longing and need for a son when he says what can be translated as, **“Lord! Bestow upon me one of the righteous.”** (TMQ, 37: 100). Allah (SWT) then responds to his prayer saying what can be translated as, **“So We gave him the good tidings of a forbearing youth.”** (TMQ 37: 101).

Can you imagine his happiness then! An old man living far from his land and people. Can you imagine how much he is attached to this young boy, who is not an ordinary boy, but “a boy ready to suffer and forbear.”

We then read in the Ayah (102) what can be translated as, **“Then when he (His son) reached the age of endeavoring with him”** (TMQ, 37: 102). After the boy had grown up, Ibrahim (AS) had a hard dream as can be translated as, **“he said, “O my son, surely I see in a dream (Literally: time of sleeping)”** (TMQ, 37: 102), not a direct command from Allah (SWT), or through *Jibril* (Gabriel), but through a night vision. Nevertheless Ibrahim (AS) never hesitated because he knew that the vision (the term vision is used instead of dream) of Messengers is always true. He did not ask for a reason, but told his son what can be

translated as, **“he said, “O my son, surely I see in a dream (Literally: time of sleeping) that I should slay you; so, look, what do you see?” (TMQ, 37: 102).**

This question was not to express his hesitation to slaughter his son, but Ibrahim (AS) wanted his son to share the reward. What did Isma'il (AS) say? He was left by as a little boy in a lonesome desert by his father who is going to slaughter him but Isma'il said what can be translated as, **“He said, “O my (dear) father, perform whatever you are commanded; you will soon find me, in case Allah (so) decides, among the patient.” (TMQ, 37: 102).**

Then comes the main Ayah in the Surah in what can be translated as, **“So, as soon as they had both surrendered, and he dashed him upon his brow.”(TMQ, 37: 103).** The question that arises in this situation is: Weren't they already Muslims by the time of this command? Yes, but the word [submitted] in this state reveals the comprehensive meaning of Islam, which is surrendering to Allah (SWT) without hesitation.

Why the Surah was called “As-Saffat”:

As-Saffat are the angels who surrender to Allah, Almighty, therefore the Surah starts by describing these faithful creatures.

It is also worth noticing that whenever a Surah in the Qur'an begins with mentioning angels, this means that the main pivot of this Surah will be surrendering to Allah (SWT), because they are the symbol of such a meaning.

Submission to Allah (SWT) willing or unwilling:

If the person refuses to submit during his lifetime, there is a warning in the Surah against the horror of the Day of Judgment as what can be translated as, **“And bid them stand; surely they are to be questioned, How is it that you do not vindicate one another? No indeed; (but) they are today submitting themselves.” (TMQ 37: 24-26).** As if it says, “ You either surrender willing in life, or you will be forced to surrender in the hereafter.”

So surrender to all of Allah's (SWT) commands and laws, even if you do not know the reason behind them. However Allah (SWT) with His Mercy has given convincing reasons for the majority of his commands. Yet He kept the meaning behind some of these commands hidden so as to know who will obey and who will disobey, and behave arrogantly.

= Surat Sad =

All chapters in parts 22 and 23 express one idea, which is submission to Allah (SWT). This Surah reveals the meaning, that although you Muslim surrender to Allah's (SWT) orders and commands, you might do wrong. The question is will you turn back to Him repentantly? Or will you remain arrogant, and insist on your opinion?

Going back to the right path without being stubborn:

The Surah relates the story of three Messengers who made quick decisions, but they soon realized their mistake. This is one of the most important types of submission to Allah (SWT) because he who is arrogant never surrenders to the right path, and if he finds himself doing

wrong he will insist on it. Therefore the Surah relates the story of Satan who is the symbol of arrogance.

Dawud “David” turning repentantly to Allah:

The first story mentioned in the Surah is that of the Messenger Dawud (David) (AS), when two antagonists disputed with each other in front of him and asked him in what can be translated as, **“As they entered upon Dawud; then he was alarmed of them. They said, “Do not fear (anything); two adversaries we are. One of us has been inequitable to the other, (Literally: some of us against some “others”) so judge between us with the truth, and do not act injudiciously, and guide us to the level path.” (TMQ, 38: 22).** However Dawud (AS) gave a quick verdict in the favor of one of them, but he quickly reverted to Allah (SWT) in what can be translated as, **“He (Dawud) said, “Indeed he has already done an injustice to you in asking for your ewe (in addition) to his ewes; and surely many intermixes are indeed inequitable one against the other, (Literally: some of them are unfair to some “others”) except the ones who have believed and done deeds of righteousness, and how few they are!” And Dawud surmised that We had only tempted (Or: tried) him; so he asked forgiveness of his Lord, and he collapsed bowing down and turned penitent. A prostration is to be performed here. So We forgave him that, and surely he has in Our Providence proximity indeed and a fair resorting.” (TMQ, 38: 24-25)**

Solaiman “Solomon” turning repentantly to Allah (SWT):

The second story is that of Solaiman, Dawud’s son (PBUT) in what can be translated as, **“And We bestowed on Dawud (David) Solaiman; (Solomon) how excellent a bondman he was! Surely he was a constant resorter (to Us).” (TMQ, 38: 30)**

The ayahs explain Solaiman’s quick repentance in what can be translated as, **“As there were set (in parade) before him at nightfall light-footed (Literally: standing on three feet) coursers. Then he said, “Surely I have loved the love of (earthly) charitable (things) better than the Remembrance of my Lord, “until (the sun) disappeared behind the curtain (Literally: made herself disappear with the curtain).”(TMQ, 38: 31-32)**

When he realized that the horses diverted him from invocation of Allah (SWT), he decided to kill them. He said what can be translated as, **“Turn them back to me!” Then he took to striking (Or: slashing) their shanks and necks. (TMQ, 38: 33)**

The ayahs also describe another example of his repentance; **“And indeed We already tempted Solaiman, (Solomon) and We cast upon his chair a corporeal (form); thereafter he turned penitent.” (TMQ, 38: 34)**

Ayoub repenting to Allah:

Finally comes the story of Ayoub (SAWS) when he swore to hit his wife a 100 times. Then came the words from Allah that can be translated as, **“And (we said) “Take in your hand a jumble of rushes, then strike therewith, and do not break (your oath).” Surely We found him a patient (man). How excellent a bondman he was! Surely he was a constant resorter (to Us).”(TMQ 38: 44).**

Thus he repented and turned back to the right path, and Allah (SWT) found him a way so as not to break his oath, He ordered him to take 100 thin sticks and hit his wife slightly.

It is noticed that the stories of the Messengers in the Surah concentrated on their servitude to Allah (SWT):

Dawud- what can be translated as, **“(Endure) patiently what they say; and remember Our bondman Dawud (David) (a man) possessing prowess (Literally: hands). Surely he was a constant resorter (to Allah).”** (TMQ, 38: 17). This means that he quickly turned to Allah.

Sulaiman- what can be translated as, **“how excellent a bondman he was! Surely he was a constant resorter (to Us).”** (TMQ, 38: 30).

Ayoub- what can be translated as **“Surely We found him a patient (man). How excellent a bondman he was! Surely he was a constant resorter (to Us).”** (TMQ, 38: 44)

We notice the repetition of the meanings of servitude to Allah (SWT) and turning to Him in true devotion.

Iblis “Satan” and arrogance:

On the contrary to the Messengers who turned repentantly to Allah (SWT), the Surah reveals a completely different example of Iblis “Satan” in what can be translated as, **“So the Angels prostrated themselves, all of them all together, Except Iblis; he waxed proud, and was (one) of the disbelievers.”** (TMQ, 38: 73-74)

His arrogance was the main reason behind his rejection of Faith, therefore Allah (SWT) confronts him saying what can be translated as, **“Said He, “O Iblis, what prevented you to prostrate yourself to what I created with My Hands? Have you waxed proud, or are you of the exalted?”** (TMQ, 38: 75). The result was what can be translated as, **“Said He, “Then get (Literally: go out) out of it; so surely you are a constant outcast. And surely My curse is on you till the Day of Doom.”** (i.e., Judgment).” (TMQ, 38: 77-78)

This horrible example of Iblis becomes clear at the end of the Surah, so that we can compare between those who submitted to Allah (SWT), and Iblis, Allah’s (SWT) enemy who was driven away from His Mercy because of his arrogance.

Surat Az-Zumar (The Hordes)

This Surah is Makkan. It comes after Surat “Saba’a” in the order of revelation and after “Sad” in the order of the Qur’an. It consists of 75 Ayahs.

A secret between Allah and His servant:

This Surah is one of the most beautiful Surahs of the Qur’an because it includes ayahs with wonderful meanings. Its objective is clear : One should be sincere to Allah in whatever one does, shouldn’t seek ostentation but rather Allah’s satisfaction. He, who wants to put himself to test on the level of sincerity in his work, should read then this Surah, and open his heart to its ayahs.

The level of sincerity:

You should never seek people’s satisfaction, expecting them to say about you : he is a pious man, he has learnt the Qur’an by heart, he prays regularly in mosques and so forth. Be sincere to Allah (SWT) when you worship Him; and, you, my Muslim sister, be sincere to Allah (SWT) through obeying and satisfying your husband.

You, parents, be sincere through raising up your children, and encourage them to obey Allah (SWT) and advocate Islam. Be sincere throughout your life, so that you might guarantee being among the group of the Believers in heaven and among those who grasped well the meaning of this Surah and Allah’s objective in it.

It is to Allah that sincere devotion is due.

This aspect is quite clear from the very beginning of the Surah what can be translated as, **“Surely We have sent down to you the Book with the Truth; so worship Allah, making the religion faithfully His. Verily the faithful religion is for Allah. And the ones who take to themselves patrons apart from Him (say), “In no way do we worship them excepting that they may bring us near in proximity to Allah.” Surely Allah will judge between them concerning that wherein they differ among themselves. Surely Allah does not guide him who is a liar, a most disbelieving (person).” (TMQ, 39: 2-3).**

Words and ayahs about sincerity succeed one another. We read what Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Say, “Surely I have been commanded to worship Allah, making the religion faithfully His. And I have been commanded to be the first Muslim.” (Literally: of the Muslims = of those who surrender (to Him) Say, “Surely I fear, in case I disobey my Lord, the torment of a Tremendous Day.” Say, (This is addressed to the Prophet) Allah I worship, making my religion faithfully His. So worship whatever you decide on, apart from Him.” Say, “Surely the losers are they who lose their (own) selves and their own families on the Day of the Resurrection. Verily that is the evident, all-deserved loss.” (TMQ, 39: 11-15).**

Therefore, the ayahs emphasize the same meaning, which is the complete sincerity to Allah (SWT) in worship and work.

Let your work be as pure as milk:

There is an Ayah in Surat “Al-Nahl” which clarifies, in a wonderful way, the meaning of sincerity: Allah says what can be translated as, **“And surely in (the) cattle (there) is indeed a lesson for you. We give you to drink of what is in their bellies, even between filth and blood, exclusively (pure) milk, palatable to the drinkers.”** (TMQ, 16: 66)

This white milk comes out from the remains and blood, a drop of which if mixed with milk will spoil it. Can you be sincere in your devotion to Allah (SWT), and purify it from any defects? Can you sacrifice every second in your life for the sake of Allah (SWT): when you speak to people about Islam, when you pray, when you read the Qur’an, and myself when I write this book. We should all be sincere to Allah (SWT) so that He might accept our work and good deeds.

Which is better for you?

Allah (SWT) then sets a similitude in accordance with the meaning of sincerity when He says what can be translated as, **“Allah has struck a similitude: a man in whom associates are at variance with each other, and a man wholly submissive to (one) man. Are the two equal (in likeness)? Praise be to Allah; no indeed, (but) most of them do not know.”** (TMQ, 39: 29). Is he who works for one master equal to the person who works for more than one? Is the employee working under the supervision of one boss similar to the one who gets orders from many, with different opinions and different jobs? That is why the phrase, “Praise be to Allah,” comes directly after this example. Indeed, the fact of having only one Lord (Allah (SWT)) is a blessing for which we should be grateful.

Being sincere to Allah (SWT) in your deeds is useful to the heart, as it arouses your spirits in this world, and increases your reward in the hereafter.

Types of sincerity:

The ayahs of the Surah deals with all types of sincerity. The first type is being sincere in worship when Allah says what can be translated as, **“Is he who is devoutly (praying) at various times of the night, prostrate and upright, being wary of the Hereafter, and hoping for the mercy of his Lord (the same as the disbeliever)? Say, “Are the ones who know equal to the ones who do not know?” Surely only the ones endowed with intellects would remind themselves.”**(TMQ, 39: 9).

A bright example for a person who is sincere in his worship of Allah (SWT), and who does not seek people’s good opinion and estimate. He rather seeks to satisfy his Lord. He, therefore, does his best in worshipping Allah (SWT) praying at night while people are asleep.

Then comes another type of sincerity; one that is more important than what has just been said. It is sincerity in repentance, even when you turn back to Allah (SWT) in repentance in the ayahs that can be translated as, **“Say, (This is addressed to the Prophet) “O My bondmen who have been extravagant against themselves, (i.e., who have committed sins) do not feel despondent of the mercy of Allah! Surely Allah forgives guilty (deeds) all together; surely He, Ever He, is The Ever-Forgiving, The Ever-Merciful. And turn penitent to your Lord, and surrender to Him, even before the torment comes up to you; thereafter you will not be vindicated.”** (TMQ, 39: 53-54).

Notice the expression, **“turn penitent.”** It reveals the quick repentance to Allah (SWT). From this we conclude that sincerity helps the person to go on obeying Allah (SWT) and turning back to Him in repentance.

If they ask for help, He will offer it to them:

At the end of the Surah the ayahs warn us against false worshiping and associating partners with Allah in what can be translated as, **“Say, “Is it then, other than Allah you (willfully) command me to worship, you ignorant ones?” And indeed it has already been revealed to you (The Prophet) and to the ones before you: “Indeed in case you associate (other gods with Allah), indeed your deeds will definitely be frustrated and indeed you will definitely be among the losers. No indeed, (but) Allah you (must) then worship and be among the thankful.” (TMQ, 39: 64-66).**

How could a person be insincere to Allah (SWT) to whom all things in heaven and earth belong? False worshiping and insincerity are an underestimation of Allah’s (SWT) Greatness (Allah forbid). Then comes the Ayah saying what can be translated as, **“And in no way did they estimate Allah His true estimate; and the earth all together will be His grasp on the Day of the Resurrection, and the heavens will be folded in His Right Hand. All Extolment be to Him, and Supremely Exalted be He above whatever they associate (with Him)! (TMQ, 39: 67).** All those who associate partners with Allah (SWT), whether openly or secretly, do not really understand the Greatness of Allah (SWT).

An end that arouses spirits:

We then come across some humble ayahs that move hearts as they describe scenes from the Day of Judgment: the conditions of people in hell and of those in heaven. Such ayahs purify you from false worshiping and hypocrisy or ostentation, and increase your fear from Allah (SWT) which consequently help you in repentance and worship. Read what can be translated as, **“And the Trumpet is blown; then whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth will (get) stunned, excepting whom Allah decides (to exempt). Thereafter it will be blown another time; then, only then will they be upright, looking on! (TMQ, 39: 68).** Then Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And the ones who disbelieved will be driven in hordes to Hell until when they have come to it, its gates will be opened, and its Keepers will say to them, “Did not Messengers come up to you from among yourselves reciting to you the signs of your Lord and warning you against the meeting of this your Day?” They will say, “Yes indeed, but the word of torment has come true against the disbelievers.” (TMQ, 39: 71). “And the ones who were pious to their Lord will be driven in hordes to the Garden till when they have come to it, and its gates will be opened, and its Keepers will say to them, “Peace be upon you! You have been good, so enter (into) it eternally (abiding).” (TMQ, 39: 73).**

What a difference between the destinations of both people and between the expressions, “Its gates will be opened,” in both cases. The magnificence of the Qur’an is clear in using the word “and” to express this difference.

People from both parties will be led to the place Allah reserved for them (Paradise or Hell) where they will settle forever. They will both be led in company with the type of people (believers, disbelievers) with whom they spent their lifetime. **“And the ones who were pious to their Lord will be driven in hordes to the Garden till when they have come to**

it, and its gates will be opened, and its Keepers will say to them, “Peace be upon you! You have been good, so enter (into) it eternally (abiding).” (TMQ, 39: 73).

Allah (SWT) says about the destiny of the disbelievers what can be translated as,

What is the difference between both ayahs? Only the one who is interested in learning and understanding the Qur’an can notice the difference. On the one hand, the disbelievers will be led to Hell frightened, suddenly the gates of hell open to them (Allah forbid). On the other hand, the believers move peacefully in one crowd looking forward to heaven, and its gates open to them.

What a great expression, and a wonderful meaning. You will notice that there is not a letter in the Qur’an that has no meaning or significance. This is what we refer to as the inimitable nature of the Qur’an in so far as the style and meaning are concerned.

Don’t you wish to follow them?

The Surah ends with ayahs that soften the heart and fill it with craving for heaven in what can be translated as, **“And the ones who were pious to their Lord will be driven in hordes to the Garden till when they have come to it, and its gates will be opened, and its Keepers will say to them, “Peace be upon you! You have been good, so enter (into) it eternally (abiding).” And they will say, “Praise be to Allah, Who has sincerely (made good) His promise to us and has made us inherit the earth for us, to make our location in the Garden where we decide. So how favorable is the reward of the (good) doers.” And you will see the Angels encircling round about the Throne extolling with the praise of their Lord; and (justice) will be decreed between them with the Truth; and it will be said, “Praise be to Allah, the lord of the worlds.”(TMQ, 39: 73-75).**

Why Az-Zumar?

As usual, there remains an important question : what is the wisdom behind the name of the Surah. I think, and Allah alone knows the truth about it, that what helps you most in being sincere and devoted to Allah (SWT) in your work (deeds) is being in a righteous company. Consequently, the reward you will have for your sincere devotion is to be in the hereafter with the righteous people you spent your lifetime with, the believers. As scholars state Allah (SWT) prefers to make people enter paradise in groups and not one by one.

The Surah was given that name to remind us of both parties. You have to choose for yourself how to be sincere, and with which one you would like to belong to.

Surat Ghafir (The Forgiver)

Surah Ghafir is Makkan. It follows Surat Az-Zumar both in the order of revelation and in that the Qur'an. It consists of 85 Ayahs.

Invite people to the path of Allah and leave it all to Him

The main focus of the Surah is the importance of *Da'wa* (missionary activity) and entrusting Allah (SWT) with everything in the course of such mission. But, why should one entrust Allah while performing *Da'wa*?

A person who shoulders the responsibility of *Da'wa* faces a lot of obstacles and difficulties during his/her mission. Hence, dear Moslem brother/sister, if you choose the path of *Da'wa*, the path of Allah's messengers and Prophets, you have to know that it is full of obstacles. You also have to know that you have to leave everything to Allah (SWT), entrusting Him with anything that occurs. A central Ayah in this Surah addresses you, saying what can be translated as, **"Surely We indeed vindicate Our Messengers and the ones who have believed in the present life (Literally: lowly life, i.e., the life of this world) and upon the Day when the (noble) Witnesses rise up," (TMQ, 40: 51).**

This Ayah is directed to you as well as to Prophets (**Our Messengers and the ones who have believed**), and promises you with victory from Allah (SWT) in the present life before the afterlife (**in the present life (Literally: lowly life, i.e., the life of this world) and upon the Day when the (noble) Witnesses rise up**). Thus, you have to entrust Allah (SWT) with the whole matter.

Best words and best deeds

Surat Ghafir is among many Surahs that encourage people to take the responsibility of the most honorable mission in the world throughout history, i.e. *Da'wa*. It is the path taken by messengers and Prophets, therefore one must be keen on following it, and even to dedicate one's life to deliver good and righteousness to people.

Yet, this mission is not a difficult one. It does not require persons of genius or scholars to handle it. Thus, you can talk to your colleagues and friends about Islam, and its greatness and mercy. You can even spread useful Islamic tapes or books that help in teaching people the truths about their religion and bring them closer to Allah (SWT). O Moslem sister! You can talk to your girl companions about chastity and shyness with whatever means that reaches their hearts easily. You don't have to wait for the results, you have to work and leave it to Allah (SWT) who guides whom He (SWT) wants to His right path.

I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord

As the Surah talks about *Da'wa* and about confiding to Allah (SWT) leaving everything in His hands, these meanings appear clearly twice in the story of Prophet Musa (AS) "Moses". Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And Firaawn (the Pharaoh) said, 'Leave me (alone) (i.e., Keep away from me) to kill Mûsa, and let him invoke his Lord. Surely I fear that he may exchange your religion or that he may cause corruption to appear in the land.'" (TMQ, 40: 26).**

When *Firaawn* threatened to kill Musa, Musa (AS) continued his *Da'wa*, inviting people to the path of Allah (SWT) and His religion, and he depended on Allah in handling all that would happen. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And Mûsa said, “Surely I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every proud (one) who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.” (TMQ, 40: 27).**

I confide my command to Allah

The second example of confiding to Allah (SWT) is embodied in a believer from Firaawn's house. This man concealed his belief, but when he saw Firaawn and his followers weaving a conspiracy to kill Musa (AS), he said what can be translated as, **“Will you kill a man for that he says, ‘My Lord is Allah’ “(TMQ, 40: 28).** Firaawn was shocked to find a man of his followers defending Musa (AS), and all the attendees were sure that he would destroy that man. Yet, the honest believer immediately confided his command to Allah (SWT) saying what can be translated as, **“Then you will soon remember what I say to you; and I confide my Command (Or: my affair) to Allah. Surely Allah is Ever-Beholding (His) bondmen.” (TMQ, 40: 44).**

What happened after this? **“So Allah protected him against the odious (things) of their scheming,” (TMQ, 40: 45).**

It is as if the meaning of the ayah is, “O Muslim! Call people to the path of Allah and don't ever be afraid of any person or of being blamed. Confide in Allah and depend on Him seeking refuge from your enemies, as Musa (AS) said what can be translated as, **“Surely I take refuge in my Lord and your Lord” (TMQ, 40: 27).**

Obstacles along the path

The path of *Da'wa* is hard and full of obstacles and hardships, but all these are much easier than those faced by Prophet Musa (AS) and the believer of Firaawn's house. Hence, if anyone mocks you, insults you, or makes your life hard, you have to resort to Allah (SWT) confiding in him, and keep on the track of *Da'wa*. The whole Muslim nation is obliged to perform *Da'wa*, as Surat Al-'Imran mentions what can be translated as, **“You have been the most charitable nation brought out to mankind: you command beneficence, and forbid maleficence, and believe in Allah” (TMQ, 3: 110).**

What is it that makes us the most charitable nation? Commanding beneficence and forbidding maleficence first, then believing in Allah (SWT). This clarifies this great obligation that distinguishes us among other nations.

The shortest way to hearts

Not only does this Surah encourage believers to perform *Da'wa*, but it also guides us to the best means of helping people. This is clear through the story of the believer of Firaawn's house, and the means used by this divine preacher in inviting his people to the path of Allah. Let's all learn wonderful Qur'anic lessons teaching us how to invite people to the path of Allah (SWT).

Logical persuasion

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And a believing man of Firaawn’s (Pharoh) house who kept back his belief said, “Will you kill a man for that he says, ‘My Lord is Allah, ‘ and he has come to you with the supreme evidence (s) from your Lord? And in case he is a liar, then his lying is upon himself, and in case he is sincere, some of that which he promises you will alight on you” “ (TMQ, 40: 28).**

The man is telling his people, “Listen to him then decide whether to accept or to refuse. Yet, you have to know that if he is lying, the consequences will be set upon him only, but if he is sincere, you will bear the results and get destroyed”. This talk is logical and wise, and it depends on simplifying facts.

Modesty with people

After using the logical method, the believer moved to another one. He said what can be translated as, **“O my people, today the kingdom is yours, you being topmost in the land; yet who will vindicate us against the violence of Allah in case it comes upon us?” (TMQ, 40: 29).**

Can you see how smart the believer was, especially in selecting the right words when talking to his people? When he talked about the kingdom and authority he said, **“the kingdom is yours”**, and so he referred to their greatness and talked about their high positions. Yet, when he talked about the torture of Allah (SWT) he said, **“who will vindicate us”**. In this context he got himself in to make them feel that he was one of them, that he was not belittling them because of his belief, and that he cared for them as he cared for himself.

Thus, from just one Ayah we can learn two lessons:

- Addressing people with the titles they like and setting them in their right positions when talking to them **“today the kingdom is yours, you being topmost in the land”**.
- Not being arrogant when talking to people, and letting them feel that the preacher is one of them **“who will vindicate us”**.

Sincere Feelings

After this the preacher moved to the emotional aspect of *Da’wa*, as he said what can be translated as, **“And O my people, surely I fear for you the Day of Summoning.” (TMQ, 40: 32).** If you want to impress people, you have to love them and make them feel your love, mercy and fear for them from the torture of Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“O my people, surely I fear for you the like of the Day of the (allied) parties” (TMQ, 40: 30).**

Using History in *Da’wa*

After using logic and emotions, there comes the role of history. The believer quoted from history to invite people to follow the path of Allah (SWT). He told them what can be translated as, **“O my people, surely I fear for you the like of the Day of the (allied) parties, The like of the steadfast manner of the people of Nûh, (Noah) and Aad, and Thamû and the ones even after them; and in no way does Allah will an injustice for (His) bondmen” (TMQ, 40: 30-31).**

A person who performs *Da'wa* should have encyclopedic knowledge and culture, especially about history and past nations, so as to encourage people learn from their ancestors.

Reminding People of the Day of Judgment

At the end, the believer started talking about the Day of Judgment, because reminding people of that day is one of the most powerful means that should be used by preachers in *Da'wa*. He said what can be translated as, **“And O my people, surely I fear for you the Day of Summoning.”** (TMQ, 40: 32), i.e. the Day of Judgment, and **“The Day you turn away, withdrawing; in no way would there be a safeguard for you from Allah; and whomever Allah leads into error, then in no way would anyone be a guide for him”** (TMQ, 40: 33).

He then got back to history, saying what can be translated as, **“And indeed Yû (Joseph) already came to you earlier with the supreme evidence (s)”** (TMQ, 40: 34). After this, he moved to using emotions, saying what can be translated as, **“O my people, closely follow me; I will guide you in the way of right-mindedness.”** (TMQ, 40: 38). He then started to remind them of the Day of Judgment, saying what can be translated as, **“O my people, surely this present life (Literally: lowly life, i.e., the life of this world) is only a (passing) enjoyment, and surely the Hereafter is (really) the Home of Residence”** (TMQ, 40: 39), before resorting to the logical methodology that can be translated as, **“And O my people, how is it with me that I call you to deliverance, and you call me to the Fire? You call me to disbelieve in Allah and to associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, and I call you to The Ever-Mighty, The Superb Forgiver”** (TMQ, 40:40-42).

The believer then concluded his preaching by confiding his command to Allah (SWT). He said what can be translated as, **“Then you will soon remember what I say to you; and I confide my Command (Or: my affair) to Allah. Surely Allah is Ever-Beholding (His) bondmen.”** (TMQ, 40: 44). What a wonderful stand and an amazing argument used by the Islamic preacher. This man was not a Prophet, but his jealousy for the religion of Allah (SWT) and his love for Islam was the reason for his being mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, to be a model followed by Islamic preachers till the Day of Judgment in using the most suitable means in performing *Da'wa*.

Supplication ...the title for confidence in Allah

Supplication is one of the most important signs of confiding in Allah (SWT), and this is why the Surah focuses much on supplication. At the very beginning the Surah mentions the angels' supplication for believers, which can be translated as, **“The ones who bear the Throne, and the ones around it, extol with the praise (s) of their Lord and believe in Him, and they ask forgiveness for the ones who have believed, “Our Lord, You embrace everything in mercy and knowledge; so forgive the ones who repent and closely follow Your way, and protect them from the torment of Hell Fire”** (TMQ, 40: 7).

The Surah concluded with an ayah famous for encouraging people to supplicate, which can be translated as, **“And your Lord has said, “Invoke Me and I will respond to you. Surely the ones who wax too proud to do Me worship will soon enter Hell utterly abject”** (TMQ, 40: 60).

Throughout the Surah, many ayahs holding the same meaning were mentioned. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“So invoke Allah, making the religion faithfully His” (TMQ, 40: 14).**

A person who will not pray or supplicate to Allah in life will regret it in the Hereafter, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“They will say, “They have erred away from us; no indeed, we used not to invoke anything earlier.” (TMQ, 40: 74).** They try will hard to pray and supplicate, but it will not do them any good after leaving it in life. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“They will say, “Then do you invoke!” And in no way is the invocation of the disbelievers in anything except in error” (TMQ, 40: 50).**

If you need support while preaching and calling people to Allah, besides confiding in Allah and submitting to Him, read the Surah of *Da'wa* and confidence, read Surat Ghafir with this intention.

Surat Fussilat (Expounded), Surat Ash-Shura (Counsel), Surat Az-Zukhruf (Decoration), Surat Ad-Dukhan (Smoke), Surat Al-Jathiyah (Kneeling), Surat Al-Ahqaf (The sand dunes)

These six Surahs have many traits in common. The first trait is that they all start with the letters *Ha Mim* that is why they are called the *Hawamim* (i.e. the Surahs that begin with the Arabic letters *Ha Mim*)

***Ha Mim* and the initial letters**

All of these Surahs start with the letters *Ha Mim*. What is therefore, the significance of these letters? We have previously mentioned in Surat Al-'Imran that Allah (SWT) wanted to challenge the Arabs with the meaning of these letters. What is implied is that these letters are the primary materials used for writing prose and poetry just like in daily life the primary materials found in our surroundings such as: iron, metals and wood, are used to make: cars, furniture, and buildings. However, the challenge lies in whether you can create from these materials a living human being. In that manner, the challenge is about the letters themselves.

Letters are the primary materials of our language. Can we, however, create from them a Qur'an? And can we breathe life into these letters? Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And thus We have sent to you (O Muhammad) *Ruh* (a Revelation, and a Mercy) of Our Command “ (TMQ, 42:52).** Thus, Allah (SWT) put forth the challenge of coming up with something like a Qur'an. (It is worth mentioning that this particular *ayah* (verse) belongs to one of the *Hawamim* Surahs)

A single key for a single purpose

The Surahs that begin with the same initials must have something in common. It seems that *Alif Lam Mim* and *Ha Mim* are the symbols (or the code) of the Surah's topic and main idea. Furthermore, all of the Surahs that begin with this symbol are similar in their topics and purpose (As in Surat Al-Baqara, Surat Al-'Imran and Surat Al-Ankabut).

Obviously, all the *Hawamim* Surahs begin with the same initials (*Ha Mim*) because they share the same purpose. In order to know this purpose, we have to examine first the points that these Surahs share:

1. They are all Makkan Surahs (revealed in Makkah).
2. They all start by illustrating the value and the greatness of the Qur'an.
3. They all mention the story of Musa (AS) (Moses) with the Israelites.
4. They all illustrate how the Message was transferred from the Israelites to Muhammad's (SAWS) nation.
5. They all encourage unity and warn against division.
6. They all end with granting forgiveness and more time.

Let us then start by examining these meanings and connecting them together to discover what Allah (SWT) wanted us to understand from these noble Surahs.

1. The value of the Qur'an:

All of these Surahs start by mentioning the value and greatness of the Qur'an:

In Surat Fussilat, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. A revelation from (Allah), the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful”*** (TMQ, 41:1 & 2).

In Surat Ash-Shura, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. ‘Ain-Sin-Qaf. Likewise Allah, the All Mighty, the All Wise sends Revelation to you (O Muhammad) as (He sent Revelation to) those before you”*** (TMQ, 42: 1 & 2 & 3).

In Surat Az-Zukhruf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. By the manifest Book (i.e. this Qur'an that makes things clear). (TMQ, 43:1& 2).***

In Surat Ad-Dukhan, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. By the manifest Book (this Qur'an) that makes things clear”*** (TMQ, 44:1& 2).

In Surat Al-Jathiyah, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. The revelation of the Book (this Qur'an) is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”*** (TMQ, 45:1 & 2).

In Surat Al-Ahqaf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“Ha-Mim. The revelation of the Book (this Qur'an) is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.”*** (TMQ, 46:1& 2).

2. The story of Musa (AS) and the Israelites:

In Surat Fussilat, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“And indeed We gave Musa (Moses) the Scripture, but dispute arose therein.”*** (TMQ, 41:45).

In Surat Az-Zukhruf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as ***“And indeed We did send Musa (Moses) with Our Ayat (proofs, evidence, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) to Fir'aun (Pharaoh) and his chiefs (inviting them to Allah's religion of Islam)”*** (TMQ, 43:46).

In Surat Ad-Dukhan, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“And indeed We tried before them Fir'aun's (Pharaoh) people, when there came to them a noble Messenger [i.e. Musa (Moses)], Saying: “Deliver to me the slaves of Allah (i.e. the Children of Israel). Verily, I am to you a Messenger worthy of all trust.” (TMQ, 44:17 &18), and “And indeed We saved the Children of Israel from the humiliating torment”*** (TMQ, 44:3).

In Surat Al-Jathiyah, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“And indeed We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, and the understanding of the Scripture and its laws, and the Prophethood”*** (TMQ, 45:16).

In Surat Al-Ahqaf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, ***“And before this was the Scripture of Musa (Moses) as a guide and a mercy.”*** (TMQ, 46:12).

The story of Musa (AS) is the most frequently mentioned story in the Holy Qur'an. One might wonder what the reason behind that is. In fact, it is because the story of Musa (AS) contains two main points. The first is his relationship with *firaawn* (Pharaoh: the king of

ancient Egypt), which represented one of the strongest confrontations in the struggle between good and evil. The second is his relationship with the Israelites who were the last nation to lead humanity before Muhammad's (SAWS) nation. Hence, this story is important so that the Muslim nation could learn from their predecessors' mistakes and from their manner of guiding humanity.

3. Transferring the Book (Message) from the preceding nation (the Israelites) to Muhammad's nation:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islâmic Monotheism) which He ordained for Nuh (Noah), and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and 'Isa (Jesus) saying you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion)."** (TMQ, 42:13).

This Surah includes an important ayah, which can be translated as, **"...you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically)"** This ayah is the central point of all the *Hawamim* Surahs. How is this so? that is what we will see once we understand the purpose of all the Surahs.

The following ayahs also convey the same meaning:

In Surat Al-Jathiyah, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Then We have put you (O Muhammad) on a (plain) way of (Our) commandment [like the one which We commanded Our Messengers before you (i.e. legal ways and laws of the Islâmic Monotheism)]. So follow you that (Islâmic Monotheism and its laws),"** (TMQ, 45:18).

In Surat Az-Zukhruf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And verily this (the Qur'an) is indeed a Reminder for you (O Muhammad) and your people (Quraish people, or your followers), and you will be questioned (about it)."** (TMQ, 43:44).

In Surat Al-Ahqaf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And before this was the Scripture of Musa (Moses) as a guide and a mercy. And this is a confirming Book (the Qur'an) in the Arabic language."** (TMQ, 46:12).

4. Unity and the danger of division:

In Surat Fussilat, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And indeed We gave Musa (Moses) the Scripture, but dispute arose therein"** (TMQ, 41:45).

In Surat Ash-Shura, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"He (Allah) has ordained for you the same religion (Islâmic Monotheism) which He ordained for Nuh (Noah), and that which We have revealed to you (O Muhammad), and that which We ordained for Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and 'Isa (Jesus) saying you should establish religion (i.e. to do what it orders you to do practically), and make no divisions in it (religion) (i.e. various sects in religion)."** **"And they divided not till after knowledge had come to them, through (selfish) transgression between themselves"** (TMQ, 42:13 & 14).

In Surat Az-Zukhruf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“But the sects from among themselves differed. So woe to those who do wrong [by ascribing things to ‘Isa (Jesus) that are not true] from the torment of a painful Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection)!”** (TMQ, 43:65).

In Surat Al-Jathiyah, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And gave them clear proofs in matters [by revealing to them the Taurat (Torah)]. And they differed not until after the knowledge came to them, through envy among themselves.”** (TMQ, 45:17).

5. Forgiveness and more time

It is interesting to see how all these Surahs ended by granting forgiveness, more time, and instructing people to be patient.

In Surat Ash-Shura, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Say (O Muhammad): “No reward do I ask of you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you.”** (TMQ, 42:23) and, **“And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives, that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah.”** (TMQ, 42:43).

In Surat Az-Zukhruf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“So turn away from them (O Muhammad), and say: *Salam* (peace)! But they will come to know.”** (TMQ, 43:89).

In Surat Ad-Dukhan, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Wait then (O Muhammad); verily, they (too) are waiting.”** (TMQ, 44:59).

In Surat Al-Ahqaf, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Therefore be patient (O Muhammad) as did the Messengers of strong will.”** (TMQ, 46:35).

After presenting the points that these Surahs have in common, the following question remains: what is the central purpose and feature they all share?

Between *Da’wa* (missionary activity) and confrontation:

These Surahs are situated in the Qur’an after Surat Ghafir and before Surat Muhammad. It is the same order in which these Surahs were revealed for they are all Makkan Surahs revealed after Surat Ghafir, and before Surat Muhammad which is a Madinan one (revealed in Madinah).

If we contemplate about the purpose of the two Surahs that are positioned before and after the *Hawamim* Surahs, we will find that Surat Ghafir discusses the importance of *Da’wa* to Allah (SWT) whereas Surat Muhammad discusses the importance of fighting for the sake of Allah (SWT) and advocating religion. Thus, we may say that these Surahs, as a whole, represent a transitional stage between *Da’wa* and confrontation.

Nevertheless, what does this have to do with the previously mentioned four points which include the value of the Qur’an, the Israelites (including those who inherited the Book), and the importance of unity, and granting forgiveness and more time?

Duties and prohibitions:

The aim of these Surahs is to make the Muslim nation aware of the fact that it has become responsible for the Qur'an, according to Allah's (SWT) order on this earth. Therefore, there are duties and prohibitions to be taken into consideration. Also, a number of significant points are required to be qualified for this responsibility.

Thus, all of the above mentioned Surahs started by highlighting the value of the Qur'an and mentioning the story of Musa (AS) and the Israelites as well as the transferring of the Book from them to Muhammad's (SAWS) nation.

Moreover, each one of these Surahs illustrates the importance of unity and the dangers of division because the loss of the Israelites and the preceding nations were caused by their division. The Surahs also highlight the importance of granting forgiveness and more time because they were revealed during the stage of introducing the Book and of calling to its adherence (i.e. the stage between *Da'wa* and confrontation). Hence, it was necessary to grant others forgiveness in order to present the Book in a sound and correct manner.

After portraying the general points and purposes that the *Hawamim* Surahs share, let us now see how each one of them serves their joint purpose, which is: You are responsible for this humanity, and there are duties and prohibitions you must consider.

= Surat Fussilat (Expounded) =

The first of these obligations for the Ummah of Prophet Mohamed (SAWS) is to understand the Qur'an and to receive it with due preservation, attention and understanding. But what is the relation between this Surah and the general objective mentioned before?

The *Ha Mim* series (Surahs that begin with the letters *Ha and Mim*) as we have noticed, represent transitional stage of calling for confrontation. The first Surah in this series shows the clarity of Allah's (SWT) message to mankind, its detailing and facilitation. This can be deduced from the name of the Surah "Fussilat" as indicated by the core ayah at the beginning of this Surah. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"A book, whereof the verses are explained in detail; an Arabic Qur'an, for people who understand"** (TMQ, 41: 3).

Good Reception:

Surat Fussilat deals with the importance of good reception of Allah's (SWT) commands.

The clarity of the transmission and reception is a must for any message to be properly delivered, in addition to the understanding of the used language. This was indicated in the first *ayahs* (verses) of this Surah. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"A Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail."** (TMQ, 41: 3). We notice this meaning clearly when Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Had we sent this as a Qur'an (in language) other than Arabic, they would have said: 'Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! A foreign (tongue) and an Arab (messenger)'"** (TMQ, 41: 44).

This Surah shows us who benefits from the Qur'an, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Say: It is a guide and healing to those who believe"** (TMQ, 41: 44). It is as if it says to the disbelievers, "Do not you understand that the problem lies in yourselves and your

receiving set.” Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And for those who believe not, there is deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their eyes.”** (TMQ, 41: 44).

Thus the Surah mentions the characteristics of the good receiver of Allah’s (*SWT*) commands. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“ In the case of those who say, “ Our lord is Allah “; and, further, stand straight and steadfast, the angels descend on them “ from time to time “; “ fear ye not! “ “They suggest”, “Nor grieve! “** (TMQ, 41: 30).

Good reception necessitates belief in Allah (*SWT*), then straightness in obedience to him. Calling people to Allah (*SWT*) and guiding them to His way facilitate the good receipt of Allah’s (*SWT*) commands.

Bad reception of revelation:

On the contrary, the Surah reveals how people look after their interest only even in their relation with Allah the Exalted. This is one of the most serious things, which impede the sound reception of Allah’s (*SWT*) signs and His Divine Decree and predestination. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Man does not weary of asking for good “things”, but if ill touches him, he gives up all hope “ and” is lost in despair. When we give him a taste of some mercy from us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say, “ This is due to my “merit”...”** (TMQ, 41: 49 –50) **“When we bestow favors on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side”** (TMQ, 41: 51).

Despite all of these concerns, which are a part of the human nature, the reception will remain sound and Allah’s (*SWT*) signs, which are an evidence of His incomparable greatness, will remain clearly visible. Thus, the following glorious ayah comes to indicate that. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Soon will we show them our signs in the “furthest” regions “ of the earth”, and in their own soul, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the truth.”** (TMQ, 41: 53).

Therefore, before completing recitation of the Ha Mim series rectify yourself so that you can benefit from these obligations and warnings, which you need during assuming your responsibility on earth.

= Surat Ash-Shura (Counsel) =

We see in Surat Ash-Shura that what is forbidden is dispute and separation, and the obligation that protects from indulging in dispute is consultation. This is the theme of Surat Ash-Shura.

Yes for disagreement, no for dispute:

It is due to the beauty of this Surah that it deals with dispute in a realistic way and emphasizes that it is natural among people that they differ. There is no problem in that as we see when Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Whatever it be wherein you differ the decision thereof is with Allah.”** (TMQ, 42: 10). But when it dealt with disunion, it warned against it severely. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Namely, that you should remain steadfast in religion and make no division therein”** (TMQ, 42: 13). It rebuked those from preceding nations who indulged in it. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be

translated as, **“And they become divided only after knowledge reached them, being insolent to another”** (TMQ, 42:14).

The Surah confirmed that disagreement is normal and logical because it is impossible for all people to agree on the same opinion in all matters. What is forbidden is division and dispute (Therefore the word division is repeated four times in this Surah). However what is the solution to maintain union in spite of difference in opinions? It is the mutual consultation, which if we maintain in all our affairs, in our houses, with our children and in our companies and institutions, we will safeguard our nation against the same separation the predecessors suffered.

= Surat Az-Zukhruf (Decoration) =

Surat Az-Zukhruf emphasizes the basic meanings of the *Ha Mim* series and directs attention towards one of the warnings that can endanger the responsibility of guarding the Book. This warning is clearly evident through the name of the Surah, which is Az-Zukhruf or temptation by the vanities of this world and its false glitter. Thus, the Surah sheds light on material appearances and people being dazzled by them, as this is one of the grave reasons behind neglecting the divine message. The Surah confirmed, by contrast, that real adornment and felicity do not exist in this life but in paradise, which has been promised to the pious.

The worldly life enjoyment:

The mention of gold and silver is repeated in this Surah more than any other. If those material appearances were equal to a mosquito wing for Allah (SWT), He would deprive disbelievers of them. It was possible, due to their contemptible value, that Allah (SWT) might grant disbelievers many of these appearances but He did not so that the believer may not be tempted and follow them.

Listen with me to these ayahs as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And were it not that (all) people might become one community we would provide for everyone that blasphemes against the Most Gracious, silver roofs for their houses, and (silver) stairways on which to go up* And (silver) doors to their houses, and couches (of silver) on which they could recline. And also adornments of gold. But all this was nothing but enjoyment of the present life: the Hereafter, in the sight of your Lord, is for the righteous.”**(TMQ,: 43:33-35).

Real adornment:

While the Surah mentions the evanescent enjoyment of this life and calls people for asceticism in it, it also reveals the real adornment and that is paradise and what Allah (SWT) has prepared for the pious in it. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Enter you the garden, you and your wives, in (beauty and) rejoicing*To them will be passed round, dishes and goblets of gold: there will be there all that the souls could desire, all that the eyes could delight in: And you shall abide there in (for aye)”** (TMQ,: 43:70-71).

It is as if the meaning is, “O believers do not be dazzled by this life’s ornament. Do not be deceived by its enjoyment because the hereafter’s enjoyment prepared for the pious is more important and splendid.”

Shortsightedness:

The Surah goes on criticizing those who measure things based on appearances. It talks about the polytheists as follows in what can be translated as, **“Also, they say: why is not this Qur’an sent down to some leading men in either of the two (chief) cities?”**(TMQ, 43:31).

They denied the Qur’an, not because of the Qur’an itself, but because it was not sent down to the rich chiefs and people of high rank. Thus, the following ayah answers them in what can be translated to mean, **“Is it they who would portion out the mercy of your Lord”** (TMQ, 43:31).

Unfortunately, we find many people who use the same logic as disbelievers in the above-mentioned ayah. They refuse religion either out of fear for some accustomed appearances to which they were accustomed or because they disdain to deal with the religious people. To those we say: Read Surat Az-Zukhruf and do not set this life ornament as a barrier between you and religion.

The ayahs go on stating life enjoyment in what can be translated to mean, **“Is then one brought up among trinkets, and unable to give a clear account in a dispute (to be associated with Allah)?”** (TMQ, 43:18). In the next ayah Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And they make into females angels who themselves serve Allah”** the word females is a reference to the material appearances that one seeks.

Pharaoh and material appearances:

This is Pharaoh who wanted to disprove Musa (AS) (Moses) so he was deceived by his material strength. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Does not the dominion of Egypt belong to me, (witness) these streams flowing underneath my (palace)? What see you not then?”** (TMQ, 43:51).

Pharaoh’s view about Musa (AS) was a material one. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Am I not better than this (Moses), who is a contemptible wretch and can scarcely express himself clearly?”** (TMQ, 43: 52-53). Pharaoh was immersed in material appearances to the extent that he asked Musa (AS) to bring golden bracelet from the heaven, as if this bracelet would make him believe in Allah (SWT).

Issa (Jesus) son of Mary: Symbol Of asceticism:

As a contrary example to Pharaoh, that man who has been blinded by this worldly life and its materialism, comes Issa (AS) (Jesus) in what can be translated as, **“When (Jesus) the son of Mary is held up as an example, behold your people raise a clamor thereat (in ridicule)”** (TMQ, 43:57). This noble Prophet (AS) was a good example to children of Israel in asceticism and lightening worldly ornament. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“He was no more than a servant: we granted our favor to him, and we made him an example to the children of Israel”** (TMQ, 43:59).

What was then his message? We notice that his mission included two central core points connected with the *Ha Mim* Surahs in what can be translated to mean:

“When Jesus came with clear signs, he said: Now have I come to you with wisdom” (TMQ, 43:63). This wisdom is the substitute for all these appearances in which Issa’s people took an interest. (This is consistent with the objective of Surat Az-Zukhruf)
“And in order to make clear to you some of the (points) on which you dispute” (TMQ, 43:63). (This is accordant with Surat Ash-Shura objective of union).

Beware of adornment:

Surat Az-Zukhruf, through guiding Muslims to assume their responsibility towards the Qur’an, warns that if they cling to the material appearances, they will not prosper.

Is there any reason behind the deterioration of our nation in this era other than hanging on to material appearances and being dazzled by the western material civilization?

The Surah warns also those who take friends on the basis of material appearances as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Friends on that Day will be foes, one to another except the righteous”** Then comes the comment when Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“The (Qur’an) is indeed a reminder for thee and for thy people; and soon shall you (all) be brought to account” (TMQ, 43:44).**

This is the real honor and divine glory. It lies in adhering to the Holy Qur’an and acting in accordance with Islamic teachings. This ayah shows us how the objective of Surat Az-Zukhruf comes under the general objective of the *Ha Mim* series which is: Beware of seeking glory in material appearances and do adhere to the Qur’an because in it lies your exaltation and glory.

= Surat Ad-Dukhan (Smoke) =

Surah Az-Zukhruf has warned man against the danger of being overpowered by the deceiving materialistic luxury of life and against its effect on the *Ummah’s* (nation) duties towards the Qur’an and religion in general. Surat Ad-Dukhan then comes to warn against the allurements of power and high-handedness.

The end of evil-doers in life

Harsh words in the verses comment on the end of evildoers and whoever toes their line as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“They left how many gardens and springs, And plantations and how honorable a station, And what comfort they used to (enjoy) cheerfully! Thus (it was); and We made another people to inherit (these favors). So, in no way did the heaven and the earth weep for them, and in no way were they respited.” (TMQ, 44: 25-29).**

Surah Az-Zukhruf states that *Firaawn* (Pharaoh) rejected *Musa (AS)* (Moses) because he was deceived by his materialistic possessions. Surat Ad-Dukhan, on the other hand, cites another reason, which is his power and high-handedness as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“From Fir’aun; (Pharaoh) surely he was exalted, of the extravagant.” (TMQ, 44: 31).**

The torment of evildoers in the afterlife

The Surah describes a horrible scene of The Day of Judgment of those who were diverted away by power and high-handedness and who forgot obeying Allah (SWT) when they are tortured. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Surely the Tree of Az-Zaqqum, Is the food of the constantly vicious. Like molten metal, it boils in the bellies, As the boiling of scalding water.”** (TMQ, 44: 43 - 46).

Allah’s (SWT) also says what can be translated as, **“Taste! Surely you, (only) you are (i.e., you used to think that you were mighty) the constantly mighty, the constantly honorable!”** (TMQ, 44: 49) is a horrifying image of the torture in the afterlife that will befall those who went astray from the path of Allah (SWT) and were proud of their power and authority in this life.

= Surat Al-Jathiyah (Kneeling) =

Surat Al-Jathiyah addresses the Muslims who shoulder the Trust of Allah (SWT) and hold the Qur’an in their hearts. The Surah warns them against arrogance and conceit as Allah (SWT) says in what can be translated as, **“Woe to every constantly vicious (and persistent) falsifier, (Who) hears the signs (i.e. ayah, signs or verses) of Allah recited to him; thereafter he persists in waxing proud, as if he has not heard them; so give him the (good) tidings of a painful torment. And when he knows anything of Our signs, he takes them to himself in mockery; those will have a degrading torment.”** (TMQ, 45: 7-9).

The arrogant usually cannot preserve the message and loses sight of the truth. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And as for the ones who have disbelieved, (it will be said), “So, were not My ayah being recited to you, yet you waxed proud, and you were a criminal people?”** (TMQ, 45: 31).

The Prophet (SAWS) said, “The person who has an atom weight of arrogance in his heart will not be permitted to enter Paradise.”

This is why the Surah is called *Al-Jathiyah* (bowing the knee) to remind us about the arrogant nations who were deceived by their power and authority. This Surah describes to us the humility that awaits them in the Hereafter in what can be translated as, **“And you will see every nation kneeling. Every nation will be called to its Book. (It will be said), “Today you will be recompensed for whatever you were doing.”** (TMQ, 45: 28).

The arrogant thinks that he is a counterpart of Allah (SWT) so the Surah ends with an *ayah* (verse) that makes any heart that carries arrogance tremble as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And to Him (belongs) the Supreme Grandeur in the heavens and the earth; and He is The Ever-Mighty, The Ever-Wise.”** (TMQ, 45: 37).

= Surat Al-Ahqaf (The Sand Dunes) =

Surat Al-Ahqaf brilliantly concludes, *Hawamim* (the Surahs that start with *Ha-Mim*). It features the different responses to the Qur’anic doctrine manifested in the previous Surahs. There were negative responses such as *Aad* in what can be translated as, **“And remember the brother of Aad, as he warned his people beside (i.e., in the valley of) the Sand Dunes and already warnings had passed away even before him, and even behind him, (saying), “Do not worship anybody except Allah! Surely I fear for you the torment of a tremendous Day.”** (TMQ, 46: 21). They rejected his message strongly in what can be

translated as, **“They said, “Have you come to us to falsely (diverge) us from our gods? Then come up to us with (i.e., bring us) what you promise us, in case you are of the sincere.””** (TMQ, 46: 22) and even when they saw Allah’s (SWT) punishment, arrogantly, in what can be translated as, **“Then, when they saw it as a traversing (cloud) proceeding towards their valleys, they said, “This traversing cloud will be (giving) us rain!” No indeed, (but) it is what you sought to hasten, a wind wherein is a painful torment,”** (TMQ, 46: 24).

Even Jinns responded

The Jinns were the example that Allah (SWT) chose for the positive response to His call. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And (remember) as We turned about to you a batch of the jinn listening to the Qur’an; so, as soon as they were in its presence they said, “Hearken!” Then, as soon as it was accomplished, they turned back to their people, constantly warning.”** (TMQ, 46: 29). This proves that only Allah (SWT) bestows guidance and that man has no power in this matter. So what was their reaction when they heard the call of Allah (SWT)? Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And (remember) as We turned about to you a batch of the jinn listening to the Qur’an; so, as soon as they were in its presence they said, “Hearken!” Then, as soon as it was accomplished, they turned back to their people, constantly warning. They said” ‘O our people, surely we have heard a Book that was sent down even after Musa, (Moses) sincerely (verifying) what was before it, (Literally: between its two hands) guiding to the Truth and to a straight road.”** (TMQ, 46: 29-30). Even Jinns believed Musa (AS) and hailed the value of the Qur’an and the role of Muslim generations in preserving it (notice how the integration among the Surahs of the Qur’an is quite obtrusive). After urging patience and tolerance in the previous Surahs, Surat Al-Ahqaf ends with what can be translated as, **“O our people, answer the Caller of Allah, and believe in Him, (and) He will forgive you (some) of your guilty (deeds), and (offer) you neighborly (protection) from a painful torment.”** (TMQ, 46: 31).

Responding to parents

The Surah presents another kind of response, which is obedience to the parents. Again two examples are cited. The positive response in what can be translated as, **“And We have enjoined on man to show fairest (companionship) to his parents. His mother conceived him under compulsion, and she brought him forth under compulsion, and his pregnancy (i.e., the time he is in the womb) and his weaning are thirty months. Until, when he reaches full age, and reaches forty years, he says, “Lord! Dispense (to) me that I may thank (You) for Your favor wherewith You have favored me and my parents (both), and that I may do righteousness satisfying You, and make me righteous in my offspring. Surely I repent to You, and surely I am one of the Muslims.”** (i.e., one who surrenders to Allah)” (TMQ, 46: 15). On the other hand, there is the negative response of disobedience and cruelty in what can be translated as, **“And he who says to his parents, “Fie upon you (both)! Do you (definitely) promise me that I will be brought out, when already generations have passed away before me?” And they both ask Allah for succor, “Woe to you! Believe; surely the promise of Allah is true.” Yet he says, “In no way is this anything except myths of the earliest (people).”** (TMQ, 46: 17).

The subsequence and integration of Surahs

In the Qur'an, the *Hawamim* fell between Surah Ghafir, which stressed the importance of *Da'wa*, and Surat Muhammad, which is known as the Surah of Fighting. Thus, the verses that urge patience and tolerance increase towards the end of the Surahs. In Surah Az-Zukhruf there was what can be translated as, **"Yet pardon them, and say, 'Peace!' Yet eventually they will know."** (TMQ, 43: 89). The meaning is clearer in Surah-Ad-Dukhan, it starts with what can be translated to mean, **"So be on the watch for a Day when the heaven will come up with an evident smoke,"** (TMQ, 44: 10) and ends with what can be translated to mean, **"Then be on the watch; surely they (too) are on the watch"** (TMQ, 44: 59).

Patience...Confrontation.... Then conquer and victory

It seems that the *Hawamim* are the last Surahs that grant a respite to disbelievers. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"That (is) what Allah gives as good tidings to His bondmen who have believed and done deeds of righteousness. Say, 'I do not ask of you a reward for it, except amity for kinship.' And whoever scores (Literally: commits) a fair deed, We will give him increase of fairness (i.e., goodness) therein. Surely Allah is Ever-Forgiving, Ever-Thankful."** (TMQ, 42: 23), **"O our people, answer the Caller of Allah, and believe in Him, (and) He will forgive you (some) of your guilty (deeds), and (offer) you neighborly (protection) from a painful torment"** (TMQ, 46: 31). Then the last verse in Surat Al-Ahqaf gives the final command of tolerance in what can be translated as, **"Therefore patiently persevere, as did (all) Messengers of inflexible purpose; and be in no haste about the (Unbelievers)"** (TMQ, 46: 35).

The following Surah is Surat Muhammad, the Surah of fighting then Surat Al-Fath, which declares that victory is in the offing. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Surely We have given you an evident conquest, (Literally: conquered for you; or: opened for you)"** (TMQ, 48: 1).

We pray to Allah (SWT) that the readers of the Qur'an have gained love of the *Hawamim* and that they start memorizing them and reflecting on the integration of their ayahs and goals.

Surat Muhammad, Surat Al-Fath (Conquest), Surat Al-Hujuraat (The Apartments)

These three Surahs are Madinan and all focus on Prophet Muhammad (SAWS): believing him, obeying him and urging discipline with him.

= Surat Muhammad =

The Surah consists of 38 Ayahs. It mentions acceptance and abortion of deeds 12 times. This is closely associated with obeying Allah (*SWT*) and obeying the Messenger (*SAWS*). For instance, Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“O you who have believed, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and do not void your deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 33). Thus, it can be deduced that the message of the Surah is that obeying Prophet Muhammad (*SAWS*) and following his *Sunnah* are the criteria upon which deeds are either accepted or aborted. Hence, one should reflect on this meaning while reading the Surah and wonder about one’s attitude towards Prophet Muhammad’s (*SAWS*) *sunnah*, worship and manners.

Obedience is the criterion of following

The Surah was entitled “Muhammad” to remind Muslims that following Prophet Muhammad (*SAWS*) is the criterion of the acceptance of their deeds or their rejection. This is because any path other than that of Prophet Muhammad (*SAWS*) (meaning different from his *sunnah*) is misguided. Therefore, if you are wondering about the acceptance of your deeds, check your obedience to the Prophet (*SAWS*) and your following of his *sunnah* because this is the correct criterion.

Let’s reflect on the ayahs of the Surah learn how to follow our Prophet (*SAWS*) as Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“The ones who have disbelieved and barred from the way of Allah, (He) will make their deeds to err away. And the ones who have believed and done deeds of righteousness and have believed in what has been successively sent down upon Muhammad-and it is the Truth from their Lord-He will expiate for them their odious deeds and will make righteous their state. That is because the ones who have disbelieved have closely followed untruth and the ones who have believed have closely followed the Truth from their Lord. Thus Allah strikes their similitudes for mankind.”** (TMQ, 47: 1-3) and **“And the ones who have disbelieved, then misfortune is for them, and He will make their deeds to err away. That is for that they hate what Allah has sent down, so He has frustrated their deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 8-9).

The contrast is quite evident. Then Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“So know that there is no god except Allah, and ask forgiveness for your guilty deed, and for the male believers and female believers; and Allah knows your moving about and your lodging.”** (TMQ, 47: 19). This shows that asking Allah’s (*SWT*) forgiveness and the word of monotheism guarantee the acceptance of deeds by Allah (*SWT*).

“But more fitting for them, Were it to obey and say what is just”

Then comes a central ayah in the Surah, where Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And the ones who have believed say, “Had a srah been successively sent down!” Then, when a clear srah is sent down, and therein fighting is mentioned, you see the ones in**

whose hearts is sickness looking at you with the look of one enveloped by the swooning of death; yet worthier of them would be. Obedience and beneficent saying. Then, when the Command is resolved, then if they were sincere to Allah, indeed it would be more charitable (i.e., better) for them” (TMQ, 47: 20-21). It is better for the disbelievers, if they wish their deeds to be accepted, to obey Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and say good words. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“That is for that they have closely followed what causes wrath from Allah and hated His all-blessed Satisfaction; so He frustrated their deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 28).

This is followed by many ayahs that stress the same meaning as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And if We had (so) decided, We would indeed have shown them to you. Then you would indeed recognize them by their marks, and indeed you would definitely know them by the distortion in their saying, and Allah knows your deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 30), **“you who have believed, obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and do not void your deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 33). **“So do not feel feeble and call for (your) submission while (Literally: and) you are the most exalted ones; and Allah is with you, and He will never divest you of your deeds.”** (TMQ, 47: 35).

It seems that the Surah addresses the Muslims affirming that any path other than that of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) is misguided. Imam Ibn Hanbal said, “I studied the Qur’an and I found that obeying the Messenger has been mentioned 33 times” then he recited what can be translated as, **“Do not make the calling of the Messenger among yourselves like your calling of one another (Literally: some of you to some others). Allah already knows the ones of you who sneak away seeking shelter (i.e., to disobey him). So let the ones who fail (to obey) His Command beware that temptation may afflict them or painful torment may afflict them.”** (TMQ, 24: 63).

How far you still are from the following saying of Allah (SWT) that can be translated as, **“And in no way should a male believer or a female believer, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a Command, have the choice in their Command. Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, then he has readily erred away into evident error.”** (TMQ, 33: 36)? How about Allah’s (SWT) saying what can be translated to mean, **“(Yet) no, by your Lord, they will not believe till they make you judge regarding what they controvert among themselves. Thereafter they should not find in themselves any restriction about whatever you have decreed, and should submit in full submission.”** (TMQ, 4: 65) We clearly see that the ayahs of Surah Muhammad join many other ayahs of the Qur’an which relate to following the Prophet (SAWS).

Obedience in *Jihad* (fighting for the sake of Allah)

The Surah is called the Surah of fighting because the word ‘fighting’ is abundantly mentioned in it. Fighting is one of the most difficult commands to be obeyed. Hence, it seems as if the Surah is stressing that *Jihad* for the sake of Allah (SWT) is a true testimony to the sincere following of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). In addition, the order to fight is a divine trial and test as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And indeed We will definitely try you until We know the ones of you who strive and the ones who are (steadfastly) patient and (we will) try your tidings (i.e., test your news to see who is a liar)”**. (TMQ, 47: 31). Thus the ayahs feature different reactions of believers and hypocrites to such divine exam. Allah (SWT) states what can be translated as, **“And the ones who have believed say, “Had a srah been successively sent down!” Then, when a**

clear surah is sent down, and therein fighting is mentioned, you see the ones in whose hearts is sickness looking at you with the look of one enveloped by the swooning of death; yet worthier of them would be.” (TMQ, 47: 20).

Obedience in spending

Therefore, the aim of the Surah is crystal-clear; it urges Muslims to follow Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) in all the moments of life especially in *jihad*. They should do so whether it is jihad in the battlefield or one’s striving to purify oneself and resist one’s desires. Since spending is the first prerequisite of *jihad*, the last ayah of the Surah stimulates Muslims to spend and strongly warn them against stinginess. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Now, you are these called to expend in the way of Allah. Then among you (some) are miserly; and whoever is miserly, then he is miserly only upon himself. And Allah is the Ever-Affluent, (Literally: Ever-Rich) and you are the poor ones. And in case you turn away, He will (readily) exchange you for another people; thereafter they will not be your likes.”** (TMQ, 47: 38).

Finally, beware replacement

Having severely reprimanded the disbelievers and warning them against disobeying Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), the Surah now addresses the believers briefly but strictly in what can be translated to mean, **“Now, you are these called to expend in the way of Allah. Then among you (some) are miserly; and whoever is miserly, then he is miserly only upon himself. And Allah is the Ever-Affluent, (Literally: Ever-Rich) and you are the poor ones. And in case you turn away, He will (readily) exchange you for another people; thereafter they will not be your likes.”** (TMQ, 47: 38).

It is a serious rule, which reminds the believers that if they ever refrain from following Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and obeying his orders, they shall be subject to severe punishment and serious consequences, which is “replacement”. Allah (SWT) will bring forth other people who will be more capable of protecting Allah’s (SWT) religion. The loss here will be enormous. **“...thereafter they will not be your likes.”** (TMQ, 47: 38). They would be better than you.

= Surat Al-Fath (The Conquest) =

The Surah was revealed after the Al-Hudaybia peace treaty, during a period of great depression for Prophet Muhammad’s (SAWS) companions.

Revealed when morale was suffering

In the seventh year of the *hijra* (emigration from Makkah to Madinah) after the Battle of Al-Ahzab, the conflict between Muslims and polytheists was at its peak. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) had a vision that he will enter *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* (The Sacred Mosque), so prepared himself and his companions to go to Makkah for *Umrah* (lesser pilgrimage), not battle. Nevertheless, when they reached Al-Hudaybia, the polytheists refused to allow the Muslims to enter Makkah. The Prophet (SAWS) then decided to sign a peace treaty with the polytheists of Makkah and it later came to be known as the Al-Hudaybia peace treaty.

The terms of the treaty were blatantly unfair for Muslims, which caused the Prophet's (SAWS) companions to become extremely upset at the Prophet's (SAWS) acceptance of it. Their sadness increased when they were prevented from entering *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* for performing *Umrah* and from fighting the polytheists. They felt they had accepted a bad deal for their religion.

At this difficult time, the Surah was sent down. Imagine yourself in the place of the Companions, strengthening the soul with the promise of *Umrah*.

The Prophet's happiness with the Surah

The name of the Surah explains its objective. It is the Surah of victories and divine generosity for this *Ummah* (Muslim nation). It was sent to enumerate the victories that Allah (SWT) will bestow upon the Muslims. Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) rejoiced with this Surah and said, "I have been sent a Surah that is better than anything on earth," and the Companions asked, "What is it Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Surat Al-Fath."

Let us take a look at the Surah, so that we might rejoice as our beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) rejoiced.

The Surah of divine victories

Even though the Surah consists of 29 verses, it relates many divine victories compared to the number of those Ayahs. Allah (SWT) grants Muslims eleven victories, favors, and good fortunes in this Surah:

1. Forgiveness of Sins: **Surely We have given you an evident conquest, (Literally: conquered for you; or: opened for you) That Allah may forgive you your guilty (deeds)-whatever of them has gone forward and whatever is postponed-and perfect His favor upon you, and guide you (The Prophet) on a straight Path, (TMQ, 48:1-2).**
2. Fulfillment of Favor: **"His favor upon you." (TMQ, 48:2).**
3. Guidance: **"And guide you (The Prophet) on a straight path." (TMQ, 48:2).**
4. Victory: **"And that Allah may vindicate you with a mighty victory." (TMQ, 48:3).** Notice that forgiveness comes before victory.
5. Sending tranquillity into the hearts of Muslims: **"He is (The One) Who sent down serenity (or: tranquillity) into the hearts of the believers, that they may increase in their belief to their belief." (TMQ, 48:4).**
6. Admitting those who believe into heaven: **"That He may cause the male believers and the female believers to enter the Gardens beneath which the rivers run, eternally (abiding) therein." (TMQ, 48:5).**
7. Exposing and punishing hypocrites and polytheists: **"And that He may torment the male hypocrites and the female hypocrites, and the male associators and the female associators, the ones surmising ill surmises of Allah." (TMQ, 48:6).**
8. Allah's Satisfaction with the believers: **"Indeed Allah has already been satisfied with the believers." (TMQ, 48:18).**
9. Material gains: **"Allah has promised you much booty to take." (TMQ, 48:20).**
10. Promising Muslims admission to *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* (The holy Mosque in Makkah): **"Indeed Allah has already vouchsafed to His Messenger the vision of**

The Truth: “Indeed you will definitely enter the Inviolable Mosque, in case Allah (so) decides secure.” (TMQ, 48:27).

11. Security and peace: **“(some of you) heads clean-shaven, (and some) hair cut short, not fearing. Yet He knew what you did not know, and so set up for you, apart from that a near conquest.” (TMQ, 48:27).**
12. Manifestation of Islam: **“He is (the One) Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the Religion of the Truth, that he (would) make it topmost above all religion.” (TMQ, 48:28).**

It wasn't until this Surah was revealed that the companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) had been told the precious good news that Islam will prevail the whole world.

Praise be to all of the Prophet's cCompanions

This Surah has more praise for the companions of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) than any other Surah, notwithstanding the dissatisfaction they expressed regarding the peace treaty of Al-Hudaybia at the beginning. Allah (SWT) knew that their satisfaction was not for their own sake, but for the sake of Allah (SWT) and His Religion.

Notice the ayah Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Surely the ones who swear allegiance to you, surely swear allegiance only to Allah: the Hand of Allah is above their hands.” (TMQ, 48: 10).** Why did the Prophet's companions deserve all these victories, and all that praise? Ayah 18 answers this question saying what can be translated as, **“Indeed Allah has already been satisfied with the believers as they were swearing allegiance to you beneath the tree. So He knew what was in their hearts, then sent down serenity upon them; and requited them with a near conquest.” (TMQ, 48: 18).**

This refers to the instance when Othman's (RA) murder was rumored and Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) took a pledge from his companions to fight for Othman's (RA) revenge. They pledged to fight until death in the cause of Allah (SWT). When their loyalty reached the point of giving their lives for Allah (SWT), He revealed to them a quick victory.

Examples of victory

By reflecting on the meanings of the Surah, we notice that the ayahs considered the Al-Hudaybia peace treaty a victory, even though it did not appear to be so. This caused Omar Ibn Al-Khattab (RA) to ask, “Is it a victory?” and the reply was, “O Omar, it is a victory.” The strange thing is that the peace treaty was called a victory while the Qur'an did not describe even the battle of Badr as such.

In addition, the word ‘victory’ was repeated four times throughout the Surah. This makes of it the Surah in which the word is the most frequently used, even though its ayahs are only 29. Not only that, it was also described as, “a mighty victory,” and twice as, “a speedy victory.” The ayahs did not only focus on victory, but also mentioned, “much booty,” twice. I guess you will be asking yourself the same question as Omar (RA), “Where is the victory?”

This victory was an increase in the rate of spread of Islam, because the number of those who embraced Islam after the treaty of Al-Hudaybia (in just two years) was twice more than the number of those who embraced it throughout the 20 previous years of *Da'wa* (missionary activity).

Even though the Prophet's (SAWS) companions wished to fight and were prepared for it, the ayahs showed that the real victory was the spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, because the best atmosphere for Islam to spread and gain converts is peace. This is the glory of Islam. History testifies to its being a religion of peace. In fact, the times of its greatest expansion was during peace not war and thus we understand why the word 'tranquility' was mentioned in the Surah three times.

Characteristics of the people of victory

The last ayah describes the characteristics of those who deserved such divine victory in what can be translated as, **"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and (the ones) who are with him are strict against the steadfast disbelievers, constantly merciful among themselves. You see them constantly bowing themselves, (and) constantly prostrating themselves, seeking Grace from Allah and all-blessed Satisfaction. Their mark is on their faces, (being) the trace of prostration; that is their likeness in the Tawrah; (the Book revealed to Musa (Moses), of which the extant Torah is a corruption) and their likeness in the Injil (The Book revealed to Isa (Jesus), of which the extant Gospel is a corruption) is as a plantation that brings out its shoot; then it upholds it; then it grows stout; then it matures level upon its stalks, wonderful to the diligent planters, that through them He may enrage the steadfast disbelievers. Allah has promised the ones of them who have believed and done deeds of righteousness forgiveness and a magnificent reward"**. (TMQ, 48: 29).

The importance of this ayah is that when it described the characteristics of those who deserve victory as it was mentioned in *Taurat* (Torah), it praised their servitude to Allah (SWT) in what can be translated as, **"Their mark is on their faces, (being) the trace of prostration; that is their likeness in the Tawrah; (the Book revealed to Musa (Moses), of which the extant Torah is a corruption) and their likeness in the Injil (The Book revealed to Isa (Jesus), of which the extant Gospel is a corruption) is as a plantation that brings out its shoot; then it upholds it; then it grows stout; then it matures level upon its stalks, wonderful to the diligent planters, that through them He may enrage the steadfast disbelievers."** (TMQ, 48: 29)".

In fact, Jews gave priority to materialism over spirituality, whereas Christians did the opposite. Thus, this ayah came to show that the *Ummah* that deserves divine victory is the one that combines both, without exaggerating one over the other. That is why the Prophet's (SAWS) companions deserved victory.

The magnificence of Surat Al-Fath made Prophet Mohammed (SAWS) recite it when entering Makkah victorious. When he reached the final ayah rejoicing Allah's (SWT) victory, his companions recited it crying when they felt they had been given the victory that Allah (SWT) promised them. The Surah is one of the most wonderful in that it takes us to the time of the conquest of Makkah as if we were with Prophet Mohammed (SAWS) and his companions, optimistic about Allah's (SWT) victory for us. This will happen if we follow our Prophet (SAWS) and his companions in the characteristics they embody as mentioned in the last ayah.

Between Surat Muhammad and Surat Al-Hujuraat

As we have mentioned, this Surah is a completion of the Surah of war, Surat Muhammad. It deals with victory and domination, a natural conclusion to fighting and striving for the sake of Allah (SWT). If we look at the endings of both Surahs, we will find a great connection.

Surat Muhammad ended with what can be translated as, **“And in case you turn away, He will (readily) exchange you for another people; thereafter they will not be your likes.” (TMQ, 47: 38).** What are their characteristics? The answer comes at the end of Surat Al-Fath in what can be translated as, **“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and (the ones) who are with him are strict against the steadfast disbelievers, constantly merciful among themselves.” (TMQ, 48:29).**

Thus, we conclude that Surat Muhammad spoke about following the Prophet (SAWS), while Surat Al-Fath mentioned the characteristics of those who do so.

= Surat Al-Hujuraat (The Apartments) =

This Surah speaks about the rules of behavior especially towards the Prophet (SAWS). Thus, we can understand the sequence of the three Surahs, and how their main pivot is Prophet Muhammad (SAWS): Surat Muhammad shows that following the Prophet (SAWS) is the manual for accepted deeds; Surat Al-Fath reveals the characteristics of those upon whom Allah (SWT) will bestow victory in what can be translated as, **“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and (the ones) who are with him . . .” (TMQ, 48:29).**

This Surah, Al-Hujuraat, addresses specifically those upon whom Allah (SWT) will bestow victory, stating that they should behave themselves according to established social conduct, especially with the Prophet (SAWS). The qualities mentioned at the end of Surat Al-Fath namely self-sacrifice, *jihad* (fight for the sake of Allah), and balance between worship and worldly success, are cited in Surat Al-Hujuraat.

Conduct with Allah’s decree

Surat Al-Hujuraat is the Surah of the good manners and decency towards all sides, above all Allah’s (SWT) Decree. Allah says in what can be translated as, **“O you who have believed, be not forward before (Literally: between the Two Hands of) Allah and His Messenger, (i.e., do not ant) and be pious to Allah; surely Allah is Ever-Hearing, Ever-Knowing.” (TMQ, 49:1).**

This ayah tells the Prophet’s companions not to be in haste for new ayahs to be revealed and to conduct themselves properly with Allah’s (SWT) Decree. Applying this ayah in our daily life requires submission to Allah’s (SWT) Decree and the Prophet’s (SAWS) Sunnah and not transgressing them.

Conduct with the Prophet (SAWS)

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as:

1. **“O you who have believed, do not raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice, and do not be loud in your speech to him, as you are loud to one another, (Literally: as some of you are loud to (some) others) (for fear) that your deeds would be frustrated, while you are not aware.” (TMQ, 49:2).**

2. **“Surely (the ones) who tone down their voices in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, those are they whose hearts Allah has tested for piety...” (TMQ, 49:3).**
3. **“Surely (the ones) who call out to you from beyond the apartments, most of them do not consider. And if only they (waited) patiently, until you go out to them, that would be more charitable (i.e., better) for them...” (TMQ, 49:4-5).**

Conduct with news and information

We should not circulate or repeat any news nor should we pass judgment before making sure that such news is true, Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“O you who have believed, in case an immoral (person) comes to you with a tiding, then (ascertain) the evidence, for that you may afflict a people in ignorance, (and) then you become remorseful for what you have performed” (TMQ, 49:6).**

Conduct with the Believers

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Surely believers are only brothers.” (TMQ, 49:10).** Brotherhood in belief strengthens relations between people and strengthens belief; without it, many disagreements happen and belief weakens.

Conduct while making peace

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And in case two sections of the believers fight each other, then make a righteous (reconciliation) between them both; (Literally: act righteously between them) then in case one of them is inequitable to the other, then fight the one that is inequitable until it concedes to the Command of Allah. So in case it concedes, then make a reconciliation between them both with justice, and be equitable. Surely Allah loves the equitable (ones).” (TMQ, 49:9).**

Conduct with social relationships

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“O you who have believed, let not any people scoff at (another) people who may be more charitable than they; neither let women scoff (other) women who may be more charitable (i.e., better) than they. And do not defame one another, (Literally: do not defame yourselves) nor revile one another by nicknames. Miserable is the name, evident immorality, after belief! And whoever does not repent, then those are they who are the unjust.” (TMQ, 49:11).**

“O you, who have believed, avoid much surmise; surely some surmise is a vice. And do not spy on each other, (Literally: some of you on some others) nor backbite one another;” (TMQ, 49:12).

Conduct with humanity in general

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“O you mankind, surely We created you of a male and a female, and We have made you races and tribes that you may get mutually acquainted. Surely the most honorable among you in the Providence of Allah are the most pious” (TMQ, 49:13).**

It is noticed that good conduct has declined among people, even though it is more comprehensive than other morals. The whole thrust of the Surah is that Muslims should mend and reform themselves and improve their behavior with the Prophet (SAWS) before facing the world. This way they will earn the respect of all people and this fine conduct that they practice so well, will be transferred to others that they meet.

Behaving oneself with Allah SWT

This is the final moral mentioned in the Surah, and is achieved by realizing the real blessing of belief and that it is from Allah (SWT). No one should assume that their faith is a favor towards Allah (SWT), but it is Allah (SWT) who graces us with such a blessing. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“They would oblige you that they have become Muslims! Say, “Do not oblige me by your Islam. No indeed, (but) Allah obliges you that He has guided you to belief, in case you are sincere.” (TMQ, 49:17).**

Why is the Surah named Al-Hujuraat?

Some people used to call out to the Prophet (SAWS) outside his *hujaraat* (rooms), which is impolite in dealing with the Messenger of Allah (SWT). The Surah was given this name because the most important focus of all the previously mentioned morals is the Prophet (SAWS). Thus, all Muslims would learn that they could not go face the world and deal with nations with these manners, they must behave appropriately with their Prophet (SAWS) first.

The Surah started with how to behave with the Prophet (SAWS), and ended with how to behave with Allah (SWT). The meaning is that behaving well with the Prophet (SAWS) and obeying him will result in Allah (SWT) supporting you in the rest of your behavior so that you emerge to the world with the type of conduct described in Surat Al-Hujuraat.

If you want to strengthen your ties to the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), read the three Surahs: Muhammad, Al-Fath, and Al-Hujuraat, and ask Allah (SWT) to support you in incorporating these noble meanings into your life.

Surahs of the Twenty-Sixth Part

This Surah is the start of known as Al-Mufasssal in the Qur'an, which is the group of Surahs that start from the beginning of this Surah 'Qaf' and continue to the end of the Holy Qur'an.

We notice that the last four parts of the Qur'an focus on the revival of faith in the believers' souls, which is a fact which helps that helps us understand the ordering of Surahs in the Qur'an. The Qur'an first presents this divine path from the beginning of Surat Al-Baqara to Surat Al-Anfal. The following Surahs then focus on the means that Muslims must have so as to safeguard this divine path. Such means include embracing the causes of progress and development, adopting the manners of Prophets and submitting to Allah (SWT). As for the final Surahs of the Qur'an, the focus is primarily on strengthening the faith of the believers, reforming their hearts and reminding them of the Day of Judgment to aid them in adhering to this path, to seize responsibilities related to it, and transfer it to humanity at large.

Choose between these two paths

The Surahs of the 27th part of the Qur'an, together with Surat Qaf, are united with the question of choice: between guidance and going astray, and between heaven and hellfire. For this reason, you will discern in all these Surahs a presentation of the two paths and a call to choose: between the path to heaven and the path of hellfire, between Allah's (SWT) blessing and affliction, between provision or deprivation from Allah (SWT), between extravagant materialism or spiritualism or a balance between both. All the mentioned paths and contrasts reflect the attributes of a Surah in this part.

= Surat Qaf (The Witnessed Day) =

The first of these Surahs, Surat Qaf, places strong emphasis on the hereafter and resurrection. Beginning with death, which is the starting stage of the Day of Judgment, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And the stupor of death comes with the Truth; that is what you were averting."** (TMQ, 50:19), to the blow of the Trumpet and its enormity, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And the Trumpet is blown; that is the Day of the Threat. And every self will come, (and) with it a driver and a constantly present witness."** (TMQ, 50:20-21).

We are shown horrifying scenes from this Day and the arguments between the wreckers and their devil companions:

Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"And his comrade will say, "This is what is closely kept with me constantly ready." "Cast, you both, in (to) Hell every stubborn, most disbelieving (one),"** (TMQ, 50:23-24).

The ayahs of Creation: Thus will be the resurrection

Even the Ayahs of creation in this Surah lucidly serve the meaning of resurrection and the emergence to the land of gathering. An example would be Allah's (SWT) saying, which can be translated as, **"And We have been sending down from the heaven water blessed; so We caused to grow thereby gardens and a grain of harvest, And palm-trees aloft with spathes tiered. A provision for the bondmen; and therewith We give life to a deceased country. Thus is the going out (of the graves)."** (TMQ, 50:9-11). Why do we have all

these Ayahs? They are for us to ascertain that He who has revived the earth after its death is capable of raising the dead from their graves, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Thus is the going out (of the graves).” (TMQ, 50:11).**

For the softening of your hearts

Therefore, my Muslim brothers and sisters, read this Surah if you want your hearts to soften, because it is a reminder of the hereafter. This is the reason why the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) sometimes delivered Friday *khutbahs* (sermons) reciting this Surah alone and without the addition of another word would come down from his preaching platform. The Prophet’s (SAWS) companions would be deeply touched by this sermon to the extent that they would wait for him to deliver the same one another time. If only we could see this *sunnah* (Prophet’s guidance) being performed in Friday sermons again.

Scenes of the two groups

After the mentioning of resurrection and the horrors of the Day of Judgment and the dangers of Hellfire, the Surah depicts the final state of the two groups. Since we are given the choice between the two states, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“On the Day We will say to Hell, “Are you filled?” And it will say, “Is there any further increase?” (i.e., more to come).” (TMQ, 50: 30).** An extremely frightening Ayah, would you let yourself be amongst those whom Hell has asked for more? The Ayah that comes immediately after depicts the exact opposite scene, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And the Garden will be drawn forward for the pious, without being afar.” (TMQ, 50: 31).** A perfect transition from the picture of Hellfire as it asks for more people to Heaven as it approaches its people and prepares and beautifies itself for receiving them. This is why the question once again repeats itself; with which group would you rather be?

Reasons of deviation

If we contemplate the Ayahs of this Surah, we will notice that they concentrate on the three inclinations that lead to deviation, so that we can avoid them and protect our hearts against corruption, Allah (SWT) willing:

1. The whispering of the soul:
Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And indeed We already created man, and We know whatever his self whispers within him, and We are nearer to him than the jugular vein.” (TMQ, 50:16).**
2. The Companion (devil):
Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“His comrade will say, “Our Lord, in no way did I cause him to be inordinate; but he was in far error.” (TMQ, 50:27).**
3. Heedlessness:
Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Indeed you were already in (a state of) heedlessness of this. Then (now) We have lifted off from you your covering; so your beholding today is very sharp.” (Literally: iron “like”)” (TMQ, 50:22).**

The Muslim heart

That is why the Surah hence concentrates on the soundness of the heart-that is being free from these diseases- at its end. Look at the words ‘penitent and heedful’ for example; to whom do they really refer? Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Who is apprehensive of The All-Merciful in the Unseen and comes with a penitent heart.” (TMQ, 50:33).** Another reference: Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Surely in that there is indeed a Reminding to him who has a heart, or is eager (Literally: cast “his” hearing) on hearing, and is a constantly present witness (to the Truth).” (TMQ, 50:37).** Do you now notice the importance of the heart’s soundness in properly choosing one of the two paths?

The Surah is then concluded with the best way to help reforming the heart and helping it make the right choice, Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“We know best whatever they say; and in no way are you a potentate over them. So remind by the Qur’an him who fears (My) threat.” (TMQ, 50:45).** Therefore, this Qur’an and particularly Surat Qaf and the Surahs that follow, are the way to the soundness of the heart. I urge you, brothers and sisters, to read this Surah and learn it by heart with the intent of keeping your heart sound.

We realize now why this Surah started with an oath by the Qur’an; for it is the greatest aid in achieving the heart’s soundness and consequently choosing the right path. We have to mention here that the Surahs: Qaf, Adh-Dhariyat, At-Tur, and An-Najm, all started with an oath and it is worth mentioning here that the objectives of these Surahs are related to the Ayahs that contain the oaths as we noticed in Surat Qaf.

**= Surat Adh-Dhariyat (The Winnowers) =
= So flee to Allah =**

Surat Adh-Dhariyat concentrates on the fact that provision is in Allah’s (*SWT*) hand and that giving and deprivation are through Allah’s (*SWT*) command in this world and the hereafter. Therefore if you deviate from Allah’s (*SWT*) path and obedience, where will you go? What land would bear you? And what sky would shade you? Therefore, at the beginning of this Surah we notice that there are four oaths:

Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“And (by) the winnowers with (swift) winnowing.” (TMQ, 51:1):** It is a powerful wind that scatters the clouds preventing the falling of rain. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Then (by) the bearers of heavy burdens, (Or: obstruction).” (TMQ, 51:2):** Another powerful wind, but this one gathers the clouds causing rain to fall, absolutely the contrary of the first one. The Surah hence started with two Ayahs that represent the giving and deprivation of provision, as if saying: it is up to you to choose.

In Surat Qaf, the message was: heaven has approached and hell is calling on its residents, so choose between them. While in Surat Adh-Dhariyat, the message is clear: giving and deprivation are in Allah’s hand (*SWT*), and that is the reason of naming this Surah so; for us always to remember that Allah (*SWT*) may deprive us from our provision and send us Adh-Dhariyat if we turn away from His path. Do you feel the greatness of the Qur’an and the clarity of its ayahs?

Let us now continue with the oaths:

Allah says what can be translated as, **“Then (by) the runners with ease,” (TMQ, 51:3):** They are the ships that float on the sea holding the livelihood of people. Then Allah (SWT) goes on to say what can be translated as, **“Then (by) the dividers by the Command.” (TMQ, 51:4):** They are the angels who distribute provisions among people.

As if this oath is addressing you: who is the Charitable and Beneficial one? Who is the Beneficial and the Afflicter? You had better choose the path of the one who ordered the angels to distribute provisions, commanded the winds to gather and scatter the clouds, and managed people’s food (sustenance) and needs; for His promise is a truth, the meeting with Him is a truth, heaven is a truth, and hell is a truth. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And (by) the winnowers with (swift) winnowing. Then (by) the bearers of heavy burdens, (Or: obstruction). Then (by) the runners with ease, Then (by) the dividers by the Command. Surely what you are promised is indeed sincere. And surely the Doom is indeed befalling.” (TMQ, 51:1-6).**

So flee to Allah

While the Surah started by mentioning the fact that provision is in Allah’s hand (SWT), at the same time it assures the believers that their provision is reserved in heaven and they are not going to lose it. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And in the heaven is your provision and whatever you are promised. So by The Lord of the heaven and the earth, surely it is indeed true as (it is true) that you (can) pronounce (your languages).” (TMQ, 51:22-23).** Don’t you believe yet, even after Allah (SWT) swore on it? Listen then to what Allah (SWT) says in these Ayahs, which can be translated as, **“And the heaven (is also a sign). We have built it with (Our) Hands (i.e., Capability) and surely We are indeed extending (it) wide. And the earth, We have laid it out (as) a bedding, so how excellent are the Smoothers! (i.e., Those who make the earth as a cradle) And of everything We created pairs, that possibly you would be mindful.” (TMQ, 51:47-49).** After you have believed that giving and deprivation are in the hands of Allah (SWT), Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“So flee to Allah! Surely I am an evident, constant warner from Him to you.” (TMQ, 51:50),** a marvelous and central ayah in this Surah. Flee to Allah (SWT) oh believers, turn to Him and choose His path.

For this reason, several Ayahs with the same meaning follow; Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And remind; then surely reminding profits the believers.” (TMQ, 51:56).** This is the main purpose of creating you, to choose the path of serving Allah (SWT). Then, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“In no way would I have from them any provision; and in no way would I have them to feed Me. Surely Allah is The Superb Provider, The Owner of Power, The Ever-Pervading.” (TMQ, 51:57-58).**

Have you seen how Surat Adh-Dhariyat in its entirety revolves around the same issue: choose the path of Allah (SWT) for he is the All-Provider.

The Generosity of Ibrahim (AS) (Abraham) out of his Trust in Allah

The story of Ibrahim (AS), which is mentioned in this Surah, is also suitable for the issue of provision. We view the good omen that angels show to Ibrahim’s wife. Though she was old and sterile, they promised her with a new type of provision, a child. As if the Surah tackles the issue of provision with all its aspects. Listen to what Allah (SWT) said in what can be translated as, **“So came forward his wife, clamoring; (literally: with a clamor) then she**

beat her face, and said, “An old sterile woman!” (TMQ, 51:29). So she was astonished to know that she would bear a child under such circumstances, but the angels, Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“They said, “Thus your Lord has said; surely He, Ever He, is The Ever-Wise, The Ever-Knowing.” (TMQ, 51:30).**

The words used in telling the story themselves serve the meaning and we can almost feel the generosity of our master Ibrahim (*AS*) in them. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Has the discourse about Ibrahim’s (Abraham) honored guests come up (to your knowledge)? As they entered to him, then they said, “Peace!” He said, “Peace! (You) are a people disclaimed (by me).” (i.e., not recognized by me) So he went apart to his family, then came with a plump calf; So he laid it near them and said, “Will you not eat?”(TMQ, 51:24-26).** We see the haste in which Ibrahim (*AS*) prepared the food he wanted to offer, **“So he went apart to his family”** in addition to his generosity **“then came with a plump calf”** As if the meaning is: trust Allah for he is the All-Provider, and trust the divine generosity and be generous yourself.

= Surat At-Tur (The Mount) =

(Every person will be a constant pledge for whatever he has earned)

Continuing the issue of choice, Surat At-Tur stresses the fact that the destiny of every human being in the hereafter is subject to his deeds and earning in this world; thus, the central ayah in it is what can be translated as, **“Every person will be a constant pledge for whatever he has earned” (TMQ, 52:21).**

On the one hand, beliers will face their destiny, as Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Then woe upon that day to the beliers. They are the ones who play at their wading, (i.e., become absorbed). The Day when they are repulsed to the fire of Hell with (contemptuous) repulsing. This is the Fire that you used to cry lies to! So, is this magic, or is it you (who) do not behold? Roast in it! So (endure) patiently (in it) or do not (endure) patiently, equal it is to you!” (TMQ, 52:11-16).**

On the other hand, Allah (*SWT*) describes the destiny of the pious as what can be translated as, **“Surely the pious will be in Gardens and Bliss, Jestings with what their Lord has brought them, and their Lord will protect them from the torment of Hell-Fire. ‘Eat and drink, (rejoicing) with wholesome appetite for whatever you were doing”” (TMQ, 52:17-19).** This is completely the opposite of the beliers’ characteristics, as if the meaning is choose either of the two ways.

This constant contrast held between the two parties throughout the Qur’an has a great impact on the believers’ souls, and it is one of the reasons behind the influence of the Qur’anic ayahs on them. The ayahs then show us why those believers are eventually the winners; Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“They say, ‘Surely we were before among our families, (feeling) timorous; Then Allah was bounteous to us, and protected us from the torment of the Pestilential Wind. Surely we used earlier to invoke Him; surely He, Ever He, is The Ever Benign, The Ever Merciful” (TMQ, 52:26-28).** Haven’t you made your choice yet? Aren’t you eager to be with them?

Harmony and consistency between the Surahs

The wonder of Qur'an is crystal clear, as Surat At-Tur gracefully concludes in harmony with its beginning and with the following Surah's. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And for (part) of the night, then (also) extol Him, and at the withdrawing of the stars” (TMQ, 52:49)**. This is an atmosphere of night extolment that fits the beginning of the Surah **“(And (by) At-Tur, (The Mount))”** which is the mountain on which Allah (SWT) spoke to Musa (AS) (Moses) and assigned him to bear His Message.

The closing of Surat At-Tur is Allah's (SWT) saying, what can be translated as, **“and at the withdrawing of the stars”**, while the start of Surat An-Najm can be translated as, **“And (by) the Star when it tumbles down”** as if each of the Surahs of the Qur'an paves the way to the other.

= Surat An-Najm (The Star) =

Knowledge and science are the gift of Allah

Surat An-Najm discusses the issue of choice as well, yet between two sources of science and knowledge: Allah's (SWT) revelation on the one hand and illusions and doubts on the other.

And in no way does he pronounce (any word) out of prejudice

The most credible science and the firmest knowledge is what is a revelation from Allah (SWT) to His noble Messenger. That is why Allah (SWT) says about His Messenger in the Ayahs what can be translated as, **“And in no way does he pronounce (any word) out of prejudice. Decidedly it is nothing except a revelation revealed. One of valiant powers has taught him” (TMQ, 53:3-5)**, so the method of revelation, that Jibril (AS) (Gabriel) has carried from Allah (SWT), is the most dependable and trusted way of knowledge and science.

The Surah then presents an aspect of *Al-Israa* and *Al-Mi'raj* incident (the night journey of Prophet Muhammad from Makkah to Jerusalem and his ascension to the seventh Heaven), where knowledge and vision were true and not limited to telling and narration. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Owner of resolute splendor; (Literally: ability to transform; to convey revelation, i.e. Jibril “Angle Gabriel) so he leveled himself. (When) he was on the most exalted horizon Thereafter he (came) within reach, then hung suspended * So he was at two bows (distance) or (even) closer (still). Then He (Allah) revealed to His bondman what He revealed. In no way did the heart-sight lie (about) what it saw. Will you then wrangle with him about what he sees? And indeed he did already see him (during) another descent. At the Lote-Tree of the Utmost Boundary” (TMQ, 53:6-14)**. It is as if this Ayah is addressing disbelievers “how do you accuse the Messenger of Allah of lying when he has already seen the greatest of his Lord's signs?” Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“In no way did (his) beholding (i.e., the eyesight) swerve, and in no way was it inordinate. Indeed he has already seen of the signs of his Lord, the greatest” (TMQ, 53:17-18)**; how do you consider someone a liar when the source of his knowledge and science is Allah (SWT)?

Bottom Line: Science and assurance are the characteristics of methodology.

Their knowledge is nothing but a set of illusions

Knowledge is lucidly re-mentioned in Surat An-Najm, stressing the importance of verifying knowledge and taking it from its credible sources. The Surah presents for us two paths: the path of revelation that we explained at the beginning of the Surah and the path of those who follow their surmise and illusions, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Decidedly they closely follow nothing except surmise and what (prejudices) the selves yearn to; and indeed the guidance has already come to them from their Lord” (TMQ, 53: 23).** What proofs do those people have? They base their knowledge on extremely unsound sources like wishing and Allah (SWT) refers this as what can be translated as, **“Or even should man have whatever he covets?” (TMQ, 53:24).**

The Surah continues describing their floundering and suspicions, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Surely the ones who do not believe in the Hereafter do indeed name the Angels with female naming” (TMQ, 53:27).** So they are floundering in their suspicion and surmise, **“And in no way do they have any knowledge thereof. Decidedly they closely follow (nothing) except surmise, and surely surmise does not avail anything against the Truth” (TMQ, 53:28).** The Surah then reaches a point where Allah (SWT) proves their shallowness and poor knowledge, **“That is their attainment of knowledge. Surely your Lord is He Who knows best the ones who have erred away from His way, and He knows best the ones who are guided” (TMQ, 53:30).** Hence, the message of the Surah is ‘authenticate your sources before making judgments and when talking about knowledge.’

The Star...why?

A question is raised in this context: why was the Surah named An-Najm (The Star)? Why did it start with an oath that can be translated as, **“And (by) the Star when it tumbles down” (TMQ, 53:1)?** What does that have to do with knowledge?

Swearing by the star suggests that it tumbles and falls down, but your companion (Muhammad) has come with a methodology that in no way have the same destiny. Allah (SWT) proves this, saying what can be translated as, **“In no way has your companion (The Prophet) erred, and in no way is he misguided” (TMQ, 53:2).** Allah (SWT) sent this methodology and it is stronger than the Heaven and Earth. What a strong comparison and a splendid meaning. This religion and this revelation are more powerful than the sun and harder than the stars that we see.

The blessing of credible knowledge

You will not feel the blessing of receiving knowledge from Allah’s (SWT) revelation and the Qur’an unless you communicate with people from the West, especially those who extract their knowledge only from material sources. Just then you can feel their confused thinking and their faltering in the simplest of issues and axioms that Islam has already answered. Therefore, fellow Muslims, now that you have read this Surah, you have to select the source of your information and base your knowledge and deeds on that source. Allah (SWT) would reward you the best recompense. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth that He may recompense the ones who have done odious (deeds) for what they have done and recompense the ones who have done fair (deeds) with the fairest reward” (TMQ, 53:31).**

Coherence between the Surahs

The ending of Surat An-Najm **“So prostrate yourselves to Allah and worship (Him)”** (TMQ, 53:62) is in clear harmony with the beginning of Surat Al-Qamar, **“The Hour (The Arabic noun is feminine) has drawn near, and the moon (The Arabic noun is masculine) is cloven.”** (TMQ, 54:1). The link between them is the message saying, “get prepared for the Day of Resurrection proved by the revelation of Surat Al-Qamar, by prostrating yourselves to Allah (SWT) and worshipping Him.”

Blessings and indignations

Two among the Surahs of choice, Surat Al-Qamar and Surat Ar-Rahman, come in part 27 and complete each other ∴. The message of the former Surah is “Get to know Allah (SWT) through indignations” while the message of the latter is “Get to know Allah (SWT) through blessings”.

= Surat Al-Qamar (The Moon) =

The message of this Surah is again to choose either of the two paths: observe Allah’s (SWT) retaliation upon past disbelieving nations and decide whether to follow their path or avoid it.

Take the people of Nuh (AS) (Noah) as an example, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“The people of Nuh (Noah) cried lies before them; so they cried lies to Our bondman and said, ‘A madman’ and he was scared”** (TMQ, 54:9). Therefore, Nuh (AS) invoked Allah (SWT) against them **“So, he invoked his Lord, (saying), ‘I am overcome, so vindicate me!’”** (TMQ, 54:10). What was the result? Then **“We opened the gates of the heaven to torrential water. And We made the earth to erupt forth springs, so the waters met for a Command already estimated”** (TMQ, 54:11-12).

We then move to another scene of Allah’s (SWT) retaliation upon beliers. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Aad cried lies. How then were My torment and My warnings? * Surely We sent against them a most clamorous wind in a day of ill-luck, continuous”** (TMQ, 54:18-19).

As for the people of *Thamud*, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Thamud cried lies to the warnings”** (TMQ, 54:23). The result of their denial was dreadful, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Surely We sent against them one Shout; so they were as the chaff of a pen-builder”** (TMQ, 54:30).

With regard to the people of *Lut* (AS) (Lot), Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“The people of Lut (Lot) cried lies to the warnings. Surely We sent against them a (squall of) gravel, except the house of Lut; (Lot) We safely delivered them before dawn”** (TMQ, 54:33-34). Another example is the people of *Firaawn* (Pharaoh), as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And indeed the warnings already came (also) to the house of Firaawn; (Pharaoh) * They cried lies to Our signs, all of them, so We took them (away) with the taking of an Ever-Mighty, Supreme Determiner”** (TMQ, 54:41-42).

And indeed We have already left it for a sign. Is there then any who will recollect?

We notice that the Ayahs that show the retaliation of Allah (SWT) upon previous nations have some factors in common. The denial of disbelievers was the main reason behind their destruction. Therefore, mentioning torment is linked with words like **“Aad cried lies ... Thamud cried lies”**, even Makkah’s disbelievers were described in the ayahs as **“And they have cried lies and closely followed their prejudices; and every Command is settled”** (TMQ, 54:3).

Any people, who belie Allah (SWT) and His Prophets (may Allah’s Peace and Blessings of be upon them all), without even reflecting on His ayahs, would face torment and become an example for people to come. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as **“And indeed We have already left it for a sign. Is there then any that will recollect?”** (TMQ, 54:15). Hence, the Surah concentrates at the beginning on a sign that the disbelievers of Makkah witnessed and Allah (SWT) describes this as what can be translated as, **“The Hour has drawn near, and the moon is cloven”** (TMQ, 54:1). It is as if the message is that now that you have seen this great sign, beware of denying it lest you become a sign yourself to warn others. Yet, they turned away and cried lies, which is described by Allah (SWT) as what can be translated as, **“And in case they see a sign, they veer away and say, ‘A continuous sorcery!’”** (TMQ, 54:2).

The same words are used to comment on the end of each previous nation’s story. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“How then were My torment and My warnings? And indeed We have already made the Qur’an easy for remembrance. Is there then any that will recollect?”** (TMQ, 54:21-22).

Universal norm

The Surah then comments on former nations’ stories indicating that Makkah’s disbelievers are not better than their ancestors. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Are your steadfast disbelievers more charitable than those ones? Or even do you have an acquittal (from torment) in the Zubur? (i.e., better)”** (TMQ, 53:43). The same rule applies to all beliers and proud, as Allah says what can be translated as, **“And indeed We have already caused your sects to perish; is there then any that will recollect?”** (TMQ, 54:51).

Shouldn’t those signs, the cleaving of the moon and the stories of former nations, be enough for them? Then another Ayah is set to threaten them, as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Soon the gathering will be routed and (they) will turn their backs”** (TMQ, 54:45). What a horrible warning by Allah (SWT) referring to the Battle of Badr and the disbeliever’s defeat that would accompany it. A far harsher warning than the Battle of Badr and any other worldly calamities follows as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“No indeed, (but) the Hour is their appointment, and the Hour is more calamitous and more bitter”** (TMQ, 54:46).

“And indeed We have already made the Qur’an easy for remembrance”

While narrating the destruction of beliers, the Surah demonstrates that the Qur’an is the sole means to avoid torment and that this Qur’an was made easy for people to reflect on and learn from as Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And indeed We have already made the Qur’an easy for remembrance. Is there then any that will recollect?”** (TMQ, 54:17). It is as if the meaning is to abide by the path of Allah (SWT) and take upon yourself

learning the Qur'an by heart, attending to and reflecting on it. Hence, you get to know Allah (*SWT*), become secure from His torment and be able to choose the path of right-mindedness.

= Surat Ar-Rahman (The All-Merciful) =

Surat Ar-Rahman, along with Surat Al-Qamar, form an integral part of our knowledge of Allah (*SWT*) as they shed the light upon His blessings and pave the way for us to choose the path of belief.

They are your Muslim brothers in duties

Among all the Surahs of the Qur'an, this Surah is particularly characterized by including the new meaning that both jinn and men are committed to duties and are equally addressed by the Qur'an. This Surah therefore shows that jinn are directly addressed in what can be translated as, **“Soon shall We settle your affairs, O both ye worlds!”**(TMQ, 55:31), as if it asks the jinn too “to choose”, for the belief path is now clear with all its outlines and signs. Then comes another ayah addressing the two worlds, stating what can be translated as, **“O ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye! Not without authority shall ye be able to pass”** (TMQ, 55:32).

Moreover, the most frequently repeated ayah in this Surah which can be translated as, **“Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny?”** is addressing both jinn and men, for it states **“your Lord”** and orders both of them to thank Allah (*SWT*) for His blessings and not to deny them. When this ayah was revealed, the Prophet (*SAWS*) said, “...when I read this Surah on the jinn, their response was better than yours. They answered, “We do not deny any of your blessings Allah, all the praise is for You”¹. It is a marvelously significant meaning and a very pleasant answer to the question **“Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny?”** Please think about it whenever you read Surat Ar-Rahman and deeply thank Allah (*SWT*) by heart and soul for all His blessings.

The blessings of Allah (*SWT*):

The Surah then goes on listing the great blessings that we enjoy without really realizing their value. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as **“And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice) in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. (TMQ, 55:7-9).** The balance that Allah (*SWT*) set for judgment in heavens and earth and for judging all creatures is one of the most significant blessings He (*SWT*) bestows upon us. Yet when man deviated from the right path and exceeded his limits, injustice and corruption prevailed.

The Surah demonstrates more blessings, as Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“He has let free the two bodies of flowing water, meeting together. Between them is a Barrier which they do not transgress”** (TMQ, 55:19-20) and within the process of enlisting these great blessings, the same question is repeated over and over again.

Choose one of the two paths

¹ At-Tirmidhi, 2624.

Following the same pattern characterizing the Surahs of *juza* (chapter) 27 of the Qur'an, Surat Ar-Rahman demonstrates two categories of people. First, the one that denied Allah's (SWT) blessings. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"On that Day no question will be asked of man or Jinn as to his sin. Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny? (For) the sinners will be known by their Marks: and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet. Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny? This is the Hell which the Sinners deny: In its midst and in the midst of boiling hot water will they wander round"** (TMQ, 55:39-44). This is directly followed by the mention of the second category (i.e. the people of paradise) to strengthen the effect of these ayahs and thus enhance the opportunity of making the right choice. In this respect, Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"But for such as fear the time when they will stand before (the Judgment Seat of) their Lord, there will be two Gardens. Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny?"** (TMQ, 55:46-47).

Verily, this is one of the best Surahs that lead Muslims to recognize the blessings of Allah (SWT). This accordingly leads them to identify the right path and remain steadfast on it.

= Surat Al-Waqi'ah (The Event) =

Surat Al-Waqi'ah clearly aims at giving Muslims the opportunity to choose one of the following categories:

1. The forerunners who are considered the nearest to Allah (SWT)
2. The people of the Right Hand
3. The people of the Left Hand

This is a brief summary of this Surah, it begins with what can be translated as, **"And ye shall be sorted out into three classes. Then (there will be) the Companions of the Right Hand; what will be the Companions of the Right Hand? And the Companions of the Left Hand, what will be the Companions of the Left Hand? And those Foremost (in Faith) will be foremost (in the Hereafter)** (TMQ, 56:7-10).

The Surah then goes on telling about them and the about the fate awaiting each category of them till it concludes with the mention of the same three categories once more. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Thus, then, if he be of those Nearest to Allah, (There is for him) Rest and Satisfaction, and a Garden of Delights. And if he be of the Companions of the Right Hand, (For him is the salutation), Peace be unto thee, from the Companions of the Right Hand. And if he be of those who treat (Truth) as Falsehood, who go wrong, For him is Entertainment with Boiling Water, And burning in Hell Fire"** (TMQ, 56:88-94).

Contemplate on his dominion and choose

After the Surah mentions the fate awaiting each of the three categories, it urges you to contemplate upon Allah's (SWT) creation and check your inclination and belief then actually make the right choice. This contemplation should cover all the blessings that Allah (SWT) bestows on man and the latter being initially created by Allah (SWT) from a minor sperm. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **"Do ye then see? The (human Seed) that ye throw out, Is it ye who create it, or are We the Creators?"** (TMQ, 56:58-59). The Surah then continues to demonstrate the miraculous processes of sowing and growing and thus states what can be translated as, **"See ye the seed that ye sow in the ground? Is it ye that**

cause it to grow, or are We the Cause?” (TMQ, 56:63-64). It then mentions another great blessing (i.e. the water that we drink). Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“See ye the water which ye drink? Do ye bring it Down (in rain) from the Cloud or do We?” (TMQ, 56:68-69).** The Surah then moves to the creation of fire **“See ye the Fire which ye kindle? Is it ye who grow the tree which feeds the fire, or do We grow it?” (TMQ, 56:71-72).**

Dear Muslim brother, if you recalled all these blessings and could realize that they are all created by the order of Allah (*SWT*) with no effort exerted on your part, you have to instantly glorify Allah (*SWT*). In this respect the Surah mentions what can be translated as, **“Then celebrate with praises the name of thy Lord, the Supreme” (TMQ, 56:74).** All the praise is to Allah the Supreme.

Choose before you die

Right before the end, the Surah reminds us of death to urge you Muslims to make your choice before you die and leave this world. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Then why do ye not (intervene) when (the soul of the dying man) reaches the throat. And ye the while (sit) looking on. But We are nearer to him than ye, and yet see not” (TMQ, 56:83-85).** These are very difficult and tough moments, they make you wonder who will be among the nearest people to Allah (*SWT*) and will not experience such hard moments. Who will be among the people of the Right Hand and whose life will be concluded with suffering? I seek refuge with Allah (*SWT*) from such a fate.

A reminder between two Ayahs of praise

We find that Surat Al-Waqi’ah is concluded with an ayah that can be translated as, **“So celebrate with praises the name of thy Lord, the Supreme” (TMQ, 56:96).** This comes in conformity with concluding Surat At-Tur with an ayah of praise that can be translated as, **“And for part of the night also praise thou Him, and at the retreat of the stars” (TMQ, 52:49),** as well as, the conclusion of Surat An-Najm with an ayah of prostration that can be translated as, **“But fall ye down in prostration to Allah, and adore” (TMQ, 53:62).** Praise and worship are the greatest help that man can get when choosing the Right Path and adhering to it for as long as he lives, *insha Allah* (if Allah wills).

As the previous consecutive Surahs have a line connecting the conclusion of each of them to the beginning of the following one similarly, we can see that Surat Al-Waqi’ah is concluded with an ayah of praise that can be translated as, **“So celebrate with praises the name of thy Lord, the Supreme” (TMQ, 56:96).** The following Surah that is Surat Al-Hadid begins with an ayah of praise as well, for Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise” (TMQ, 57:01).**

= Surat Al-Hadid (Iron) = The balance between spirituality and materiality

Surat Al-Hadid also tackles the choice between materiality and spirituality. However, it never asks you to choose between them but rather encourages you to strike a balance between them.

The Muslim *Ummah* (Nation) and iron:

Before we start discussing this Surah, I must mention a depressing fact; the fact that our Ummah that reads about iron in its Qur'an does not actually know about manufacturing iron. This Surah includes a central ayah- that can be translated as, **“and We sent down Iron, in which is (material for) mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind” (TMQ, 57:25)**, but unfortunately Muslims are not applying it at present.

Iron is considered today the very symbol of heavy industry, for iron as illustrated by the ayah, can be either a **“(material for) mighty war”** (i.e. military industries) or used for the **“benefit of man kind”** (i.e. the hi-tech industry). Actually it is the main core of industry at the times of war and piece alike. But where do we stand from this concept and from the scientific, industrial and technological development?

After realizing this distressful fact, let's try to understand the meaning delivered by Allah (SWT) in this Surah to be able to perceive the balance and comprehensiveness of Islam and thus catch up with the procession of development and civilization

The Balance

What is the aim of this Surah? This Surah asks you to achieve a balance between materiality and spirituality by telling us about two categories of people. The first category completely dedicates itself to worshipping Allah (SWT) and absolutely nothing else, whereas, the second category became very hard and cruel as it dedicates itself to work and to other worldly affairs rather than the acts of obedience that it may have done to please Allah (SWT). Then the Surah shows that both groups are wrong and both have deviated from Allah's (SWT) path

Excessive materiality

The following ayah addresses the second category in a marvelous way that moves even the cruelest heart, as it reminds them of Allah (AW), in what can be translated as, **“Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them), and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime, but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors.” (TMQ, 57:16)**. It is a very gentle reproof from Allah (SWT) that was felt by the Companions though they were among the most submissive people and so they said : “Allah (SWT) has sent down this ayah to reprove us because our their hearts have hardened”.

Another ayah directly follows this ayah where Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“Know ye (all) that Allah giveth life to the earth after its death” (TMQ, 57:17)** so what is the tie between the hardness of the hearts and the rain? It is as if the ayah wants to say that Allah (SWT) who can bring the dead barren soil to life with rain can also bring the cruelest hearts to the path of submission by *Dhikr* (the mentioning of Allah)

Excessive spirituality

The other category includes those who were excessively involved in the world of spirituality, totally abandoning worldly affairs. Allah (SWT) describes them in what can be translated as,

“Then, in their wake, We followed them up with (others of) Our messengers: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary. And bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him Compassion and Mercy” (TMQ, 57:27). So far, all this is good and desired but pay attention to the second part of the ayah which states what can be translated as, **“but the Monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good Pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors.”** It is worth noting here that both ayahs discussing extravagance either in materiality or in spirituality were concluded with the same phrase, **“but many of them are rebellious transgressors”**. Why? Because deviating from the path is considered a transgression (as transgressed lexically means deviated in Arabic). Accordingly, detaching one’s self from the worldly life and completely dedicating oneself to worship is equally considered a transgression as hardening the hearts and staying away from all the spiritual aspects of life.

An Ummah that is justly balanced

It is as if the Surah delivers to us the following message: you, Ummah of Muhammad, are moderate, so you should not incline to one of the two extremes. You are justly balanced between the gentleness of the heart and the closeness to Allah (SWT) on the one side and the success in life on the other side. Thus the significant central ayah comes to illustrate this concept in a wonderful way when stating what can be translated as, **“We sent aforetime Our messengers with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong), that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron, in which is (material for) mighty war, as well as many benefits for mankind” (TMQ, 57:25).** This part stresses upon the materialistic side and achieving success in life, then moves to what can be translated as, **“that Allah may test who it is that will help, Unseen, Him and His messengers”** to make us realize that this is the typical use of iron, (i.e. to support the religion of Allah through military and technological industries).

Furthermore, the Surah states clearly that this rule is not subject to change throughout generations. Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance” (TMQ, 57:26).** The ayah talks about those who understood Allah’s (SWT) religion and who knew how to achieve a balance between materialism and spirituality. Finally, the ayah concludes again with what can be translated as **“but many of them became rebellious transgressors.”**

Balance is the magic key to light

It is worth mentioning that the word ‘*nour*’ (light) is mentioned three times in a way that unmistakably shows us the essence of balance in Islam:

- 1 On earth: Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as, **“O ye that believe! Fear Allah, and believe in His Messenger, and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy: He will provide for you a Light by which ye shall walk (straight in your path)” (TMQ, 57:28).**
- 2 On *As-sirat* (the path over hell). Allah (SWT) says what can be translated as **“One Day shalt thou see the believing men and the believing women how their Light runs forward before them and by their right hands” (TMQ, 57:12).**

- 3 In heaven: Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“and the Witnesses (who testify), in the eyes of their Lord: they shall have their Reward and their Light” (TMQ, 57:19).**
- 4 Please contemplate at the superiority and balance of this religion. The Surah assures you that your keenness on being submissive to Allah (*SWT*) will surely grant you light in this life of the world as well as in the hereafter when you will pass *as-sirat*. Moreover, the Surah mentions a light that belongs to a specific group of people that is the group of martyrs. Allah (*SWT*) says what can be translated as, **“and the Witnesses (who testify), in the eyes of their Lord: they shall have their Reward and their Light” (TMQ, 57:19)** because they were the ones who used iron in the shape of military equipments and this way could attain the peak of success in life and supporting Allah’s (*SWT*) religion on the one hand and sacrificed their lives for the sake of Allah (*SWT*), which enabled them to attain the best spiritual status and closeness to Allah (*SWT*) on the other. Thus Surat Al-Hadid represents an obvious marvelous balance.

The balance in Allah’s (*SWT*) creation

From the very beginning the Surah shows us clearly that Allah (*SWT*) governs the universe with amazing balance, as it includes several paradoxes. It states with what can be translated as, **“He is the First and the Last, the Evident and the Immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things” (TMQ, 57:03).** He it is Who created the heavens and the earth ...He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it, what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it” (TMQ, 57:04). **“He merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night” (TMQ, 57:6).**

As if the ayah says that none but Allah (*SWT*) can bring all these contradictions together, praise be to Him. He has the absolute power over this dominion, he can make it as perfectly balanced as it is. He ordered his creatures to seek balance in their life to keep their hearts from becoming hard and keep themselves from inclining towards one of the two extremes: materiality or spirituality.

You still have not chosen?

This was a presentation of *juzu 27* (the 27th part) of the Qur’an and its Surahs that urge you to choose, and impose questions on you like:

- Would you choose the path of heaven or hellfire? (Surat Qaf and Surat At-Tur).
- Would you like to be one of the forerunners and the people of the Right or one of the denying people? (Surat Al-Waqi’ah).
- Would you prefer blessings or misfortunes? (Surat Ar-Rahman and Surat Al-Qamar).
- Would you like to get your knowledge from the revealed Surahs or from doubtful suspicious sources? (Surat An-Najm).
- Would you choose Allah’s (*SWT*) boon and bestowal or deprivation? (Surat Adh-Dharyat).

- Would you choose excessive materialism, excessive spirituality or a balanced way between both? (Surat Al-Hadid).
- Finally we appeal to Allah (*SWT*) to help us making the right choice and make us benefit from what we learned of the Surahs of *juzu 27*.

Surahs of the Twenty-Eighth Part

We have reached the twenty-eighth part. The Surahs of this section all have the same theme, as we have seen in the previous section.

The Core Idea: Belonging to Islam

Throughout the Qur'an so far, various themes have been discussed in exacting detail; ranging from social morality (in Surat Al-Hujurat) to the secrets behind civilization excellence (in Surat An-Naml). In the twenty-seventh part, the issue of choosing the right path and deciding between paradise and hell was discussed. The Surahs we are looking at now, in the twenty-eighth part, have all one core idea: the sense of belonging to Islam.

It is as if the meaning is: After you, Muslims, have known the Qur'an and have understood the essence of Allah's religion, you must now belong to it. Some people might think that they belong to Islam because they perform all the obligatory acts of worship like prayers or fasting, but they really miss the point. There is a great difference between "I pray" and "I fast" on the one hand and "I belong to Islam" on the other.

Belonging to Islam means loving Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), more than anything else, and loving all fellows Muslims because they belong to the same religion as you do. Belonging to Islam entails not being fascinated by other cultures because you take pride in belonging to your own religion. In short then, the twenty-eighth part is about clinging to your own beliefs and not blindly following other people or cultures. It should not be understood, however, that Muslims should be hostile toward others; they are simply encouraged to keep their own identity, thoughts and values without resenting any other party. It is amazing how this part of the Holy Qur'an explains clearly how we can strike a balance between holding on to our own beliefs and not being hostile to others.

The series of Surahs illustrating “Belonging”:

There are nine Surahs in this part. By looking at their titles, we can see that they form a tightly cohesive series with “belonging” as a common factor:

1. Surat Aj-Jumu'a (Friday Congregation), Surat As-Saf (The Ranks), Surat Al-Hashr (The Mustering): All call for unity, collaboration and joint effort.
2. Surat Al-Mumtahina (The Woman Tested): A test of belonging.
3. Surat Al-Munafiqoon (The Hypocrites): A warning against hypocrisy; the social illness that could divide Muslims and drive them apart from each other and away from their religion.
4. Surahs At-Tahreem (Prohibition), At-Talaq (Divorce), At-Taghabun (Mutual Loss and Gain): A warning against being diverted from belonging to Islam and against being carried away by the luxuries of life (children, wives and wealth).

These Surahs, especially At-Talaq and At-Tahreem, stress the importance of the family. The latter is the starting point of fellowship and of partnership among members of the society. In other words "belonging" begins with a strong solid Muslim family and ends with a strong unified Muslim community.

Women's role in "Belonging":

Among the wonders of this part is that it starts with a story of a woman complaining about the ill-treatment of her husband (Surat Al-Mujadalah – The Dispute), then it concludes with Surat At-Tahreem which poses two role models for women: the Pharaoh's wife and Mariam (Mary), Imran's daughter.

The common issue here is women; they are the makers of men, the ones who raise children and teach them the meaning of belonging. If women knew their value in Islam, if they knew how Islam honors them, they would truly belong to it and therefore would spread this notion of affiliation to Islam to the whole *Ummah*.

That is why this part starts by restoring women's rights (in Surat Al-Mujadalah) and winds up by setting the similitude through two women. If women took note of their rights and their role in this religion, they would consequently spread this fellowship on to all the people. Hence, giving rise to new generations that will achieve the objectives of the twenty-eighth part.

Women in the Surahs of the Qur'an:

In the previous parts we have seen how most of the Surahs in the Qur'an lay stress on the role of women. In Surat Al-Imran (Imran's Family), in which 'stability' was discussed, Maryam (AS) and Imran's wife were two epitomes of stability. In Surat An-Nisa' (The Women), the most important aspect of justice, the dominant theme, was that of treating women fairly. Surat An-Naml, which discusses civilization excellence, clearly praises the Queen of Sheba for the way she ruled her people justly and led them into believing in Allah.

Do you see how Islam gives great attention to women, and how the Qur'an presents them as a central theme in many of its Surahs? Although all this is quite evident, there are still some cynics who say, "Is there any attention given to women in the Qur'an? Why does the Qur'an always address men? Why does it always use the masculine form? To those people we say: In the Arabic language the general form of address used is the masculine form. That's how Arabic works². Therefore, the Qur'an addresses both men and women using the masculine form. However, it always stresses the fact that they are partners in Islam; not only that, but that women have an even more important role since they are the ones who actually spread this notion of being an integral part of the society, as shown in this part.

² In the Arabic language, both sexes could be addressed using one pronoun, the masculine. The distinction between masculine and feminine in Arabic is not only in third person pronouns, but also in adjectives and verb conjugations. It would be quite cumbersome to use both forms each time. It is also a fact that a group of men and women are addressed by the plural masculine pronoun. (The translator's addition).

= Surat Al-Mujadalah (The Dispute) =

The origin of belonging: Women's Rights

The objective of this Surah is: Renouncing all the other religious or philosophical methodologies and remain attached to Islam.

It begins with the story of a family dispute; a woman complaining about her husband to the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS). Her husband had told her, “I swear that, from now on, you are to me like the back of my mother.”³ This meant that he could no longer treat her as a wife, in the physical and sexual sense. A great injustice, indeed! This was one of the most despicable habits of the pre-Islamic era and unfortunately it is still present until now in the society of Al-Madinah in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, this Surah was revealed from above the seventh heaven to restore the rights of the women in what can be translated as, **“Indeed Allah has heard the statement of she (Khaulah bint Tha‘labah) who disputes with you (O Muhammad) concerning her husband (Aus bin As-Sâmit), and complains to Allah. And Allah hears the arguments between you both. Verily, Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer.”** (TMQ, 58:1).

Can you see the real value of women in Islam? This woman was arguing with the Prophet (SAWS), yet this Surah was named after her, isn't that a privilege? Then the verdict of Allah was revealed from above the seventh heaven restoring her right back to her. What has all this got to do with the issue of belonging?

The twenty-eighth part starts by safeguarding a family threatened with a break-up. It defends a woman being subjected to injustice in the most intimate situation of her marital life. This was done for two reasons:

1. The first requirement for "belonging" is a strong solid family capable of preserving society's connection with the religion.
2. Acknowledging the value of women and giving them their rights intensify their love for Islam and their feelings of belonging to it. Consequently this encourages them to spread these feelings to the whole community.

The fifth ayah – directly after the ayahs of *az-zihar*⁴ – warns those who mistreat their wives in what can be translated as, **“Verily, those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad - SAWS) will be disgraced, as those before them (among the past nation) were disgraced.”** (TMQ, 58:5)

Near the end of the Surah, the same warning is repeated in what can be translated as, **“Those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad - SAWS) will be among the lowest (most humiliated).”** (TMQ, 58:20)

Which side are you on? The party of Allah or that of Shaytan (Satan)? Who is your real ally?

- Are you on this side? **“They are the party of *Shaytan* (Satan). Verily, it is the party of *Shaytan* (Satan) that will be the losers!”** (TMQ, 58:19).

³ Meaning: you are no longer lawful for me to approach as a wife.

⁴ This term describes the situation where a husband takes the oath, “You are to me like the back of my mother.” Hence, his wife is no longer lawful for an intimate relation. The initial ayahs of Surat Al-Mujadalah, describing this whole situation, are named “ayahs of *az-zihar*”.

- Or that one? **“They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful.” (TMQ, 58:22).**

The use of the word “party” shows that Islam is not only about individual acts of worship; praying and fasting. Muslims should unite in the party of Allah, and belong to it; they should strongly and clearly reject Satan's party. This way we will have achieved the objective of the Surah and become among those who prosper, *insha Allah* (if Allah wills).

The threat danger of hypocrisy:

We are asked to declare full allegiance to Allah on the one hand and to renounce the atheists on the other. The Surah warns us from those who wear masks to hide their real faces, they are the hypocrites. They are the hidden threat that can jeopardize our brotherhood and unity, **“Have you (O Muhammad) not seen those (hypocrites) who take as friends a people upon whom is the Wrath of Allah? They are neither of you (Muslims) nor of them, and they swear to a lie while they know.” (TMQ, 58:14).** The first problem with the hypocrites lies in their allegiance and relationship with the enemies of Allah. That is why Allah says what can be translated as, **“Allah has prepared for them a severe torment. Evil indeed is that which they used to do.” (TMQ, 58:15).**

The ayahs expose them, in what can be translated as **“...they say within themselves, 'Why should Allah punish us not for what we say?' Hell will be sufficient for them; they will burn therein. And worst indeed is that destination!” (TMQ, 58:8).**

Signs of hypocrisy:

This Surah was revealed to warn the believers against, *az-zihar*⁵, a phenomenon which, like *Najwa* (conspiring or counseling secretly), represents a form of social hypocrisy. In this respect, Allah says what can be translated as, **“Secret counsels (conspiracies) are only from *Shaitân* (Satan), in order that he may cause grief to the believers. But he cannot harm them in the least, except as Allah permits. And in Allah let the believers put their trust” (TMQ, 58:10).**

“Allah has heard”:

From these words we understand that the Surah is stressing the endless knowledge of Allah and His realization of everything. This is meant to let you know that Allah knows the secret and what is even beyond, so you would have no allies but Muslims, not even in your thoughts. The Surah begins with what can be translated as, **“Indeed Allah has heard the statement of her (Khaulah bint Tha‘labah) who disputes with you (O Muhammad) concerning her husband ...” (TMQ, 58:1).** Allah also says what can be translated as, **“Have you not seen that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no *Najwâ* (secret counsel) of three but He is their fourth,” (TMQ, 58:7).**

Note the choice of Allah’s names in this Surah. Most of them reflect His infinite knowledge and awareness, **“...Allah is All-Hearer, All-Seer” (TMQ, 58:1) - “...Allah is All-Aware of**

⁵ Refer to the previous footnote.

what you do” (TMQ, 58:3) - “...Allah is Witness over all things” (TMQ, 58:6) - “...Verily, Allah is the All-Knower of everything” (TMQ, 58:7).

Declaring allegiance:

The Surah concludes with a crucial ayah about total allegiance to Allah and the need to renounce all His enemies, **“You (O Muhammad) will not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day, making friendship with those who oppose Allah and His Messenger (Muhammad), even though they were their fathers or their sons or their brothers or their kindred...”** (TMQ, 58:22). There is a tone of strong rebuke that we rarely hear in the Qur’an. Never love anyone who is against your religion. This is not just about your deeds but your emotions as well. It should be noted that this includes methodologies, cultures and civilizations which oppose Islam. If they are not posing any threat or are not fighting us, then there is no harm in dealing with them, as we will see later in Surat Al-Mumtahina. However, if they oppose Allah and His Messenger, even if they were from our closest kin or most intimate friends, we are asked to renounce them. If we do that, Allah brings us good tidings, in what can be translated as, **“...For such He has written Faith in their hearts, and strengthened them with *Rûh* (proofs, light and true guidance) from Himself. And He will admit them to Gardens (Paradise) under which rivers flow to dwell therein (forever). Allah is pleased with them, and they with Him. They are the Party of Allah. Verily, it is the Party of Allah that will be the successful.”** (TMQ, 58:22).

This was Surat Al-Mujadalah. It started with relating the incident of a woman who complained about her husband to the Messenger of Allah (SAWS) and how Islam restored her rights, and ended by raising a question: You, reader of the Qur’an, which side are you on? We ask Allah (SWT) to grant us full membership in His religion.

= Surat Al-Hashr (The Gathering) =

Surat Al-Hashr tells the story of the Jews of Banu An-Nadir, and how they were expelled from Madinah after breaching a treaty with the Prophet (SAWS). Two groups of people are addressed in the Surah:

1. Those who helped the traitors and supported them; the hypocrites.
2. Those who stood firm and renounced the enemies of Allah; the believers.

I'm sure you can see how the sense of belonging is a major theme in this part. Let's examine these two groups whose true natures were revealed in this Surah.

The hypocrites – weak bonding:

When the Prophet (SAWS) wanted to expel the Jews, the hypocrites instantly started negotiating with them. These ayahs were revealed to expose them, in what can be translated as, **“Have you (O Muhammad) not observed the hypocrites who say to their friends the disbelievers: '(By Allah) If you are expelled, we (too) indeed will go out with you, and we shall never obey any one against you; and if you are attacked, we shall indeed help you.' But Allah is Witness that they verily are liars.”** (TMQ, 59:11). Note the use of the phrase **“their friends”**; the hypocrites are not the friends of the believers any more; they belong to the disbelievers. It is as if the Ayah is asking you: Which side are you on? To which party do you belong?

The ayahs continue to expose their falsehood and deception: **“Surely, if they (the Jews) are expelled, never will they (hypocrites) go out with them; and if they are attacked, they will never help them. And (even) if they do help them, they (hypocrites) will turn their backs, and they will not be victorious. Verily, you (Muslims) are more fearful in their (Jews of Banû An-Nadîr) breasts than Allah. That is because they are a people who comprehend not (the Majesty and Power of Allah).”** (TMQ, 59:12-13).

The disbelievers will never form a strong alliance or bond together, simply because they lack the faith and the comradeship to do so. They will renounce each other; just like Satan who will have the same reaction towards his followers later on, **“(Their allies deceived them) like *Shaytan* (Satan), when he says to man: ‘Disbelieve in Allah.’ But when (man) disbelieves in Allah, *Shaytan* (Satan) says: ‘I am free of you, I fear Allah, the Lord of the ‘*Alamin* (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!’”** (TMQ, 59:16).

The believers - strong bonding:

The alternative is then to belong to the party of Allah, **“(And there is also a share in this booty) for the poor immigrants, who were expelled from their homes and their property, seeking Bounties from Allah and to please Him, and helping Allah (i.e. helping His religion) and His Messenger (Muhammad - SAWs). Such are indeed the truthful (to what they say)”** (TMQ, 59:8). This is the utmost manifestation of belonging in word and deed. Can you see that? **“And (it is also for) those who, before them, had homes (in Al-Madinah) and had adopted the Faith, love those who emigrate to them, and have no jealousy in their breasts for that which they have been given (from the booty of Banû An-Nadîr), and give them (emigrants) preference over themselves even though they were in need of that. And whosoever is saved from his own covetousness, such are they who will be the successful”** (TMQ, 59:9).

Al-Muhajereen (the immigrants) had a profound belonging to Islam; they left their homes and went to Madinah, where they were blessed by an extremely warm welcome from *Al-Ansar* (the supporters). The latter had a strong sense of belonging as well; they took in their brothers and sisters in Islam despite their poverty and poor economic conditions. Throughout history, immigration is usually accompanied with problems and antagonism between the immigrants and original citizens. Yet, the relationship between the *Muhajereen* and the *Ansar* was exemplary; it was full of selflessness, love and sacrifice.

The next ayah shows the unity of this *Ummah* through the following generations, in what can be translated as, **“And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful’”** (TMQ, 59:10).

Can you see how beautifully the Qur’an describes the characteristics of the believers? Can you see how it shows that all the generations of our *Ummah* follow the same idea, the same methodology? Even in our differences, Allah tells us that we should not, in any way, demean those who preceded us, but say instead, **“Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful”** (TMQ, 59:10). Can you see the great difference between the two teams? The team of the believers would

sacrifice dearly for the sake of their brothers and their unity, whereas the team of those who take Allah's enemies as allies would betray their allies as soon as they have the opportunity to do so.

“Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain...”:

Then there comes another marvelous ayah; an ayah that tears our hearts out of fear of Allah, **“Had We sent down this Qur'an on a mountain, you would surely have seen it humbling itself and falling asunder, into pieces, by the fear of Allah” (TMQ, 59:21).**

What has this ayah got to do with the expulsion of Banu An-Nadir? The Jews thought that their fortresses would protect them from the believers, as Allah says in what can be translated as, **“...And they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah! But Allâh's (Torment)...” (TMQ, 59:2).** This ayah came asking them: How did you ever think that these fortresses would protect you from the wrath of Allah? This Qur'an can shatter mountains into pieces, so what about your fortresses? None but Allah (SWT) can grant victory and alliance.

“He is Allah...”:

At the end there come three magnificent ayahs with Allah's most beautiful names, all of which show the Power, Glory and Magnificence of Allah: **“He is Allah, beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped, the All-Knower of the unseen and the seen. He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. He is Allah beside Whom none has the right to be worshipped, the King, the Holy, the One Free from all defects, the Giver of security, the Watcher over His creatures, the All-Mighty, the Compeller, the Supreme. Glory be to Allah! (High is He) above all that they associate as partners with Him. He is Allah, the Creator, the Inventor of all things, and the Bestower of forms. To Him belong the Best Names. All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (TMQ, 59: 22-24).**

The Surah started by glorifying Allah and exalting Him, **“Whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth glorifies Allah.” (TMQ, 59:1),** and ended in the same way, **“All that is in the heavens and the earth glorify Him. And He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.” (TMQ, 59:24).** It is as if the conclusion of this Surah stresses one theme: Why do you not want to belong to Allah, He Who has the most beautiful and glorious names? Belong to Allah and to no one but Him!

= Surat Al-Mumtahina (The Woman Tested) =

The objective of Surat Al-Mumtahina is quite obvious from the very beginning; **“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists) as friends...” (TMQ, 60:1).** Of course, you can see that the themes of allegiance to Muslims and renunciation of the disbelievers are prominent all through this part. Therefore, this Surah brings us four tests of belonging:

1. Hateb Ibn-Abi-Balta'a.
2. The immigrating women.
3. The balance between loyalty and renunciation.
4. The believing women, before they took the pledge of allegiance.

Let's examine these tests together.

Hateb Ibn-Abi-Balta'a and disclosing secrets:

The Prophet (SAWS) was secretly setting up an army to surprise the disbelievers and enter Makkah, so that they would surrender without any bloodshed in the Holy Shrine. However, one of the companions (Hateb Ibn-Abi-Balta'a) sent a secret message to his family in Makkah, warning them about the attack. The whole situation put this believer's loyalty to test. This ayah was revealed to blame him for what he did, in what can be translated as, **“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists) as friends, showing affection towards them, while they have disbelieved in what has come to you of the truth, and have driven out the Messenger (Muhammad) and yourselves (from your homeland) because you believe in Allah your Lord! If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure, (then take not these disbelievers and polytheists as your friends)...” (TMQ, 60:1)**. Then a warning follows, for those who would befriend Allah's enemies, **“...You show friendship to them in secret, while I am All-Aware of what you conceal and what you reveal. And whosoever of you (Muslims) does that, then indeed he has gone (far) astray from the Straight Path” (TMQ, 60:1)**.

What is noticeable about the ayah is that it reproached Hateb in a very gentle tone. Allah assured him, his people and us that he is still regarded as a believer, **“O you who believe”**. It also states that the enemies of Allah are also his enemies. **“Take not My enemies and your enemies...”** Moreover, it reminded him of Allah's pleasure, **“If you have come forth to strive in My Cause and to seek My Good Pleasure...”** Can you see how the Qur'an dealt with this matter, which would be regarded as 'high treason' in today's military codes? It dealt with it in such a gentle and amicable way.

“Ibrahim and those with him.... we renounce you”:

Allah then presents an example of full membership in Allah's religion and renunciation of all the other ways of life in what can be translated as, **“Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Ibrâhîm (Abraham) and those with him, when they said to their people: "Verily, we renounce you and whatever you worship besides Allah: we have rejected you, and there has started between us and you hostility and hatred forever until you believe in Allah Alone" - except the saying of Ibrâhîm (Abraham) to his father: "Verily, I will ask forgiveness (from Allah) for you, but I have no power to do anything for you before Allah. " Our Lord! In You (Alone) we put our trust, and to You (Alone) we turn in repentance, and to You (Alone) is (our) final Return” (TMQ, 60:4)**.

I believe you can see now that all of the twenty-eighth part is a presentation of examples of those who belong to Islam and those who do not. Young men and women, I plead with you, before you finish reading the Qur'an, the regulations set by Allah (SWT), you have to fully grasp the idea of allegiance to Muslims and renunciation of the disbelievers.

The test of the female-believers before taking the pledge of allegiance:

This test is the main reason behind the title of the Surah, “The Woman Tested”. Listen to Allah saying what can be translated as, **“O you who believe! When believing women come**

to you as emigrants, examine them; Allah knows best as to their Faith, then if you ascertain that they are true believers, send them not back to the disbelievers.” (TMQ, 60:10). This ayah talks about discusses a very important issue for any society that would like to preserve its belonging to Islam. The ayah instructed Muslims to test immigrant women before allowing them to be part of their community to guarantee that no skeptics or deceivers would be permitted into the Muslim community. Women have the keys to the stability of any society. They are the ones who have the ability to maintain the solidarity and unity of the members of their society and to preserve their adherence and devotion to their religion. Now can you see how the Muslim community values and honors women? Can you understand the role women play in maintaining the society's relationship to Allah's religion? All of this is so obviously illustrated from Surat Al-Mujadalah to Surat Al-Mumtahina.

The test of justice with non-Muslims:

So as not to misinterpret “total loyalty versus renunciation” as being an animosity towards non-Muslims or as being a renunciation to all People of the Scripture⁶ “*Ahlul-Kitab*”, even those of them who are not fighting us, the Surah adds an important rule in dealing with non-Muslims: **“Allah does not forbid you to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you on account of religion nor drove you out of your homes. Verily, Allah loves those who deal with equity.” (TMQ, 60:8).** Just look at the magnificence of the Qur’an. Coming from the very same Surah as this ayah, **“O you who believe! Take not My enemies and your enemies (i.e. disbelievers and polytheists) as friends...” (TMQ, 60:1),** we see, **“to deal justly and kindly with those who fought not against you” (TMQ, 60:8).** Islam is in fact asking us to **“deal justly and kindly”**. We should be fair to them because, **“Allah loves those who deal with equity”**. Whom should we renounce then, and who should be our enemies?

“It is only as regards those who fought against you on account of religion, and have driven you out of your homes, and helped to drive you out, that Allâh forbids you to befriend them. And whosoever will befriend them, then those are the wrong-doers (those who disobey Allâh).” (TMQ, 60:9). Even towards the disbelievers who are showing animosity we are asked to show rationality, **“Perhaps Allâh will make friendship between you and those whom you hold as enemies.” (TMQ, 60:7).**

This is how the surah strikes a balance between belonging to Islam and renunciation of the disbelievers. We should renounce the disbelievers who are fighting us but treat those who live with us in peace with justice and forgiveness. That way Muslims will not misunderstand this important principle that distinguishes our religion.

How far you still are you from all these tests? How loyal are you to the religion of Allah and how far did you renounce the Western methodologies contradicting your religion? Are you balanced in the way you grasp the sense of belonging? Or do you renounce all disbelievers, whether they are hostile or peaceful?

Try to ask yourself these questions after reading Surat Al- Mumtahina.

= Surat As-Saf (The Ranks) =

⁶ Those who believe in the Gospel and the Torah.

The title explains itself: Muslims, unify your ranks to bring victory to Allah's religion. The central ayah in this Surah can be translated as, **"Verily, Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in rows (ranks) as if they were a solid structure."** (TMQ, 61:4).

The Israelites⁷ and belonging:

The Surah talks about the Israelites and how Musa (Moses) (AS) suffered from their feeble faith and weak sense of belonging to Allah's religion, **"And (remember) when Musa (Moses) said to his people: 'O my people! Why do you annoy me while you know certainly that I am the Messenger of Allah to you?'"** (TMQ, 61:5). The result was, **"So when they turned away (from the Path of Allah), Allah turned their hearts away (from the Right Path)."** (TMQ, 61:5).

Then Isa (Jesus) (AS) came with the same message to the same people, **"And (remember) when 'Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: 'O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming the Taurât [(Torah) which came] before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad'⁸..."** (TMQ, 61:6). Still their weak bond persisted, **"...But when he (Ahmad - SAWS) came to them with clear proofs, they said: 'This is plain magic.'"** (TMQ, 61:6).

Why don't you strive for unity?

After that comes a crucial ayah, **"They intend to put out the Light of Allah (i.e. the Religion of Islam, this Qur'an, and the Prophet Muhammad - SAWS) with their mouths. But Allah will bring His Light to perfection even though the disbelievers hate (it)"** (TMQ, 61:8).

The meaning is quite clear: Muslims, you must strive for unity and stand up for your religion because your enemies do not want you to unite or to be victorious. You now know that Allah will bring the light of His religion to perfection, whether the disbelievers like it or not, so why is your sense of belonging to this religion so weak? The following ayah brings glad tidings in what can be translated as, **"He it is Who has sent His Messenger (Muhammad - SAWS) with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all (other) religions even though the idolaters hate (it)"** (TMQ, 61:9). This religion will vanquish its enemies and stand out amidst all the other religions and methodologies, so come on, hurry up, be a part of this religion so that in the end, *insha Allah* (If Allah wills), you will be among the ones who prosper.

"Be you vindicators of Allah":

The Surah concludes with a call to all the believers: Prove your belonging! In this ayah, Allah says what can be translated as, **"O you who believe! Be you vindicators (in the Cause) of Allah..."** (TMQ, 61:14). Praying and fasting are not enough; you have to strive in the cause of Allah. This order is not limited to the *Ummah* of Muhammad (SAWS), it was also requested from the followers of all the other Prophets like Isa (AS), **"O you who believe! Be you vindicators (in the Cause) of Allah as said 'Îsâ (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), to the Disciples: 'Who are my helpers (in the Cause) of Allah?'"** The Disciples

⁷ *Bani Israel*: The descendants of Israel.

⁸ Ahmad is the second name of Prophet Muhammad – SAWS and it literally means: "One who praises Allâh more than others".

said: "We are Allâh's helpers" (i.e. we will strive in His Cause!). Then a group of the Children of Israel believed and a group disbelieved. So We gave power to those who believed against their enemies, and they became the victorious." (TMQ, 61:14).

= Surat Al-Jumua'a (Friday Congregation) =

The objective of Surat Al-Jumua'a is to stress the solidarity and unity of Muslims. *Al-Jumua'a* (Friday) prayer is the symbol of the unity of Muslims dwelling in a given quarter, a district or land. Muslims meet on a weekly basis and listen to the *Jumua'a* sermon, strengthen their ties and discuss their problems. Yet, why is this meaning lacking in our mosques? I wish that those who are giving the *Jumua'a* sermons would reconsider what they are doing to achieve the real purpose behind it. I wish that those who pray, men, children or women, would go to each *Jumua'a* prayer with the intention of renewing their ties with their fellow Muslims.

Essential elements in the *Jumua'a* sermon:

The Surah starts with the essential elements that should be present in any *Jumua'a* sermon. Listen to Allah's words in what can be translated as, **"It is He who sent among the unlettered ones a Messenger (Muhammad - SAWS) from among themselves..."** (TMQ, 62:2). What is the mission of this Messenger? What is the mission of anyone representing him for the *Jumua'a* sermon, **"...reciting to them His Verses, purifying them (from the filth of disbelief and polytheism), and teaching them the Book (this Qur'an) and *Al-Hikmah* (As-Sunnah: legal ways, orders, acts of worship of Prophet Muhammad - SAWS)." (TMQ, 62:2).** Hence the elements are:

- Reading the Qur'an and interpreting it.
- Purifying the souls.
- Teaching the Sunnah of the Prophet, and his Ahadith.

"Come to the remembrance of Allah":

The Surah is concluded with the most important things a Muslim should do to prove his/her belonging to Allah, **"O you who believe (Muslims)! When the call is proclaimed for the *Salâh* (prayer) on Friday (*Jumua'a* prayer), come to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business..."** (TMQ, 62:9). One of the signs of your belonging is your eagerness to respond once the call for prayer has been proclaimed. Hence, you would be united with fellow Muslims in the quarter you dwell in, leaving all the distracting worldly matters behind you. Allah says, in continuation, what can be translated as, **"That is better for you if you do but know!"** (TMQ, 62:9).

The Surah tells us the story of some of the Prophet's companions, when they left him giving the sermon and hurried to meet one of the convoys that was entering Makkah, **"And when they see some merchandise or some amusement they disperse headlong to it, and leave you (Muhammad - SAWS) standing [while delivering *Jumua'a* religious sermon]. Say: 'That which Allah has is better than any amusement or merchandise! And Allah is the Best of providers.'" (TMQ, 62:11).** We can see that the companions, despite their devotion and their status, were only humans after all, just like us. They might be distracted at a moment of need or anxiety. Still, their best traits were; quick repentance and submission to Allah.

“As the likeness of a donkey which carries huge burdens of books”:

On the other hand, the Surah presents a horrifying example for those who are weak in fellowship with the believers, **“The likeness of those who were entrusted with the (obligation of the) Taurât (Torah) (i.e. to obey its commandments and to practice its laws), but who subsequently failed in those (obligations), is as the likeness of a donkey which carries huge burdens of books (but understands nothing from them). How bad is the example of people who deny the Ayat (proofs, verses, signs, or revelations) of Allah. And Allah guides not the people who are wrong-doers.”** (TMQ, 62:5).

Be careful! Don't be one of those! Don't attend the sermon without being aware of its importance, and knowing what Islam is really about. Belong truly to Islam, and show the signs of your loyalty and your connection to your religion through the *Jumua'a* prayer and through your interaction with your fellow believers. This was the message in Surat Al-Jumua'a. May Allah renew these meanings in the hearts of our youth, every week and with every *Jumua'a* sermon.

= Surat Al-Munafiqun (The Hypocrites) =

This Surah *puts forward* a warning against a social ailment that could be detrimental to the fellowship of the *Ummah* by undermining its unity. That is why the Surah begins, from the very first ayah, to describe the lies and deceit of the hypocrites, **“When the hypocrites come to you (O Muhammad - SAWS), they say: ‘We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah.’ Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are, by all means, liars.”** (TMQ, 63:1).

“Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger”:

Some might think that there is a repetition in the part, **“Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger...”** However, in Arabic, if we want to evaluate the importance of a certain sentence or phrase, we simply cross it out and see how much this affects the meaning. Removing the underlined part from the sentence would suggest that Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are liars in what they are bearing witness to. This would hence, transform the whole meaning, so this part is indispensable. Not a single word or letter is extra or superfluous in the whole Qur'an; every letter and word has its purpose.

Endangering loyalty:

Look at the aspects of hypocrisy in their lives as shown in the following ayah, **“And when you look at them, their bodies please you; and when they speak, you listen to their words. They are as blocks of wood propped up.”** (TMQ, 63:4). They have slick and polished appearances, yet deep inside, **“They think that every cry is against them.”** (TMQ, 63:4), that is why, **“They are the enemies, so beware of them.”** (TMQ, 63:4).

The following Ayah exposes their arrogance towards Islam and the Messenger of Allah (SAWS), **“And when it is said to them: ‘So that the Messenger of Allah may ask forgiveness from Allah for you,’ they twist their heads, and you would see them turning away their faces in pride.”** (TMQ, 63:5).

“But honor, power and glory belong to Allah, to His Messenger and to the believers”:

Their leader, Abdullah Ibn-Ubai Ibn-Saloul was so insolent to the extent of insulting the Prophet (SAWS), **“They (hypocrites) say: ‘If we return to Al-Madinah, indeed the more honorable will expel from there the lowly.’”** (TMQ, 63:8). He meant that he is **"more honorable"** and that the Prophet (SAWS), Allah forbid, is **"the lowly"**. Instantly the same ayah disputes this claim in what can be translated as, **“But honor, power and glory belong to Allah, and to His Messenger (Muhammad – SAWS), and to the believers, yet the hypocrites know not.”** (TMQ, 63:8). This is a very powerful ayah. If you don't feel the glory of belonging to this religion, beware that you might have one of the traits of hypocrisy in you. Remember the words Al-Farouk (Omar Ibnul-Khattab) when he said, **“We are the people who have been glorified through Islam, if we strive for glory through any other means but Islam we will certainly be humiliated by Allah”**.

"Let not your properties divert you":

The Surah is concluded by mentioning the things that distract us from belonging to Islam, as a prelude to Surahs At-Taghabun, At-Talaq and At-Tahreem, which discuss this issue in detail. Allah says what can be translated as, **“O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah. And whosoever does that, then they are the losers.”** (TMQ, 63:9).

Properties (money, estates ...etc) and children were the hypocrites' major concern. Beware my Muslim brother! Don't let these things divert your attention from remembering Allah and from coming together with your fellow believers, or else you will be at the risk of becoming a hypocrite yourself. What is the solution then? Spend in charity, **“And spend (in charity) of that with which We have provided you before death comes to one of you, and he says: ‘My Lord! If only You would give me respite for a little while (i.e. return to the worldly life), then I should give *Sadaka* of my wealth, and be among the righteous.’”** (TMQ, 63:10). Spending in charity is the best shield for the hearts against the ailment of hypocrisy and all other diversions.

**= Surat At-Taghabun (Mutual Loss and gain) =
= Surat At-Talaq (Divorce) =
= Surat At-Tahreem (Prohibition) =**

As mentioned before, these Surahs discuss the diversions that distract us from our belonging to Islam. Just by reading the titles we can see that they are all about social distractions.

He who is distracted by his money, his wife and his children from remembering Allah and his religion is a deluded person. He will suffer greatly on the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain, **“The Day when He will gather you (all) on the Day of Gathering, - that will be the Day of mutual loss and gain (i.e. loss for the disbelievers as they will enter the Hell-fire and gain for the believers as they will enter Paradise).”** (TMQ, 64:9).

“Your wealth and your children are but a trial”:

The Surah unveils this reality so we wouldn't be taken in by those worldly pleasures. Allah says what can be translated as, **“O you who believe! Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for you (who may stop you from the obedience of Allah);**

therefore beware of them!” (TMQ, 64:14). Then there comes the following ayah, **“Your wealth and your children are but a trial, whereas Allah! With Him is a great reward (Paradise).” (TMQ, 64:15).**

We note here that, according to the first ayah, only some of your wives and children are enemies, but not all of them. However, they are all “but a trial” and those who will pass this test will be rewarded with great bliss, *insha Allah* (if Allah wills).

Just as in Surat Al-Munafiqun, the mention of trials is followed by an order to spend in charity, **“So keep your duty to Allah and fear Him as much as you can; listen and obey, and spend in charity; that is better for yourselves.” (TMQ, 64:16).** Allah also says what can be translated as, **“If you lend Allah a goodly loan (i.e. spend in Allah’s Cause), He will double it for you, and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Ready to appreciate and to reward, Most Forbearing.” (TMQ, 64:17).**

Dear brothers and sisters, spend in Allah’s cause to prove your loyalty to your religion and methodology and to safeguard your heart from attachment to worldly pleasures.

Don’t leave your wife:

To make sure that people do not misunderstand Surat At-Taghabun and think that they should desert their wives and children in order to devote themselves to the worship of Allah, Surat At-Tahreem gives a further explanation, **“O you who believe! Ward off yourselves and your families against a Fire (Hell) whose fuel is men and stones, over which are (appointed) angels stern (and) severe, who disobey not, (from executing) the commands they receive from Allah, but do that which they are commanded.” (TMQ, 66:6).** Don’t desert your children or walk out on your wife leaving them without guidance and companionship. Take their hands and lead them to the Right Path, so that you will all be saved from hell.

Surat At-Talaq (Divorce) = Say No to Argument =

The name of the Surah represents one of the most common forms of social disunity. Yet, the Surah asserts that we should maintain the solidarity within our society and not argue, even during divorce. We see many ayahs stressing the fact that we should fear Allah,

- **“...And fear Allah your Lord (O Muslims)...” (TMQ, 65:1).**
- **“...And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, Allah will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty)...” (TMQ, 65:2).**
- **“...and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make his matter easy for him....” (TMQ, 65:4).**
- **“...and whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will expiate from him his sins, and will enlarge his reward...” (TMQ, 65:5).**

This Surah shows the ethics of separation and divorce in the life of a Muslim family. These principles are all under one main theme “fearing Allah”. Not fearing Allah, in such circumstances, will not only break up one family but it will also extend to the whole society.

Surat At-Tahreem (Divorce) **= The Role of Women in Belonging =**

The end of the twenty-eighth part is linked to its beginning: women's role in Islam. It reminds women that they are the ties that bind the society. Muslim women are responsible for themselves and it is their duty to belong, as well. Their husbands will not be able to help them when the judgment is due; and we are reminded of the stories of the wives of Nuh (AS) and Lut (AS), **“They were the wives of two of our righteous slaves, but they both betrayed them (by rejecting their doctrine). So they [Nûh (Noah) and Lût (Lot)] availed them (their respective wives) not against Allah and it was said: ‘Enter the Fire along with those who enter!’”** (TMQ, 66:10).

On the other hand, we see the exact opposite with the wife of a committed atheist and tyrant *Firaawn* (the Pharaoh); she was a loyal believer, **“And Allah has set forth an example for those who believe: the wife of Fir‘aun (Pharaoh), when she said: ‘My Lord! Build for me a home with You in Paradise, and save me from Fir‘aun (Pharaoh) and his deeds, and save me from the people who are *Zâlimûn* (polytheists, wrong-doers and disbelievers in Allah)’”** (TMQ, 66:11).

The next example is Maryam, the daughter of Imran, whose belonging was symbolized by her chastity, modesty (*Haia'a*⁹) and dutiful worship, **“And Maryam (Mary), the daughter of ‘Imran who guarded her chastity. And We breathed into her womb [through Our *Rûh* [i.e. Jibril (Gabriel)], and she testified to the truth of the Words of her Lord, and (also believed in) His Scriptures, and she was of the obedient (to Allah).”** (TMQ, 66:12).

We ask Allah to bless us Muslims with more women like these two. We ask Allah to guide the youth of this *Ummah* to read the twenty-eighth part, understand its meanings and belong to their religion and Qur'an.

⁹ The term *Haia'* covers a large number of concepts which are to be taken together, amongst them are; self-respect, modesty, bashfulness, and morality, etc.

Surahs of the Twenty-Ninth Part

Legislative obligation:

The main message in this part is about the necessity to perform *Da'wa* (missionary activity of calling others to Islam) and to convey the discipline of Islam to the whole world. In the previous part we came to realize the importance of belonging to Islam and we felt the sweetness of loyalty to Allah's religion. Now we have to start telling other people about our discoveries, spreading this light of truth with every drop of will, wisdom and power we possess.

Da'wa is a duty of all Muslims, no matter how little their information about religion. The Prophet (SAWS) said, "Quote on my behalf, even if it is just one ayah"¹⁰. On his first day as a Muslim, Abu-Bakr called 6 of the *Sahabah* (Companions) to Islam, although his information about Islam back then was much less than yours.

For example, if you know a Hadith about the importance of *Salat* (prayer), tell it to your friends; share the information! Talk about loving Allah, about the beauty of paradise or about the Day of Judgment. These are very simple issues to talk about and you don't need to have extensive knowledge. You will find valuable information in part 29, the part of *Tabarak*¹¹.

Surat Al-Mulq (The Dominion) = Know the One you will call to =

The first Surah of this part tells you about the One you will call to; you have to know Allah before you start calling people to Islam. Get to know His dominion and greatness, "**Blessed be He in Whose Hand is the dominion; and He is Able to do all things.**" (TMQ, 67:1).

Get to know how He perfected His universe, "**Who has created the seven heavens one above another; you can see no fault in the creation of the Most Gracious. Then look again: 'Can you see any rifts?' Then look again and yet again: your sight will return to you in a state of humiliation and worn out.**" (TMQ, 67:3-4).

Look at the birds above you, look at the seas below you and ask yourself, "Who can control all of this except Allah?" Allah says what can be translated as, "**Do they not see the birds above them, spreading out their wings and folding them in? None upholds them except the Most Gracious (Allah). Verily, He is the All-Seer of everything.**" (TMQ, 67:19). Allah also says what can be translated as, "**Say (O Muhammad - SAWS): 'Tell me! If (all) your water were to sink away, who then can supply you with flowing (spring) water?'**" (TMQ, 67:30).

All these meanings pave the way for anyone aiming to start *Da'wa*. Fill your heart with love for Him, before you start calling others to His religion.

¹⁰ Authentic Hadith, Narrated by Bukhari, 3461.

¹¹ The 29th part is named "*Tabarak*" since this is the first word that occurs in the first Surah of this part (Surat Al-Mulq).

Surat Al-Qalam (The Pen), or Nun = Manners and Behavior of Those Who Call to Islam =

Surat Nun sets forth the principles of *Da'wa*; with two examples: the Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) as the model with great moral principles on one side, and those who do not abide by these principles and hence gain nothing from their *Da'wa*, on the other.

Allah says what can be translated as, **“And (O Muhammad) obey you not everyone *Hallaḥ Mahīn* (the one who swears much and is a liar or is worthless); a slanderer, going about with calumnies; hinderer of the good, transgressor, sinful; cruel, and moreover base-born (of illegitimate birth). (He was so) because he had wealth and children.”** (TMQ, 68:10-14).

The Surah narrates the story of some people who owned a beautiful garden. Their miserliness forced other people to hate them and eventually Allah took everything away from them. The story is warning us not to be miserly. Tightfistedness is one of the worst characteristics that those who call to Allah could have. It hampers their efforts in calling to Islam and prevents people from listening to them.

To perform *Da'wa*, a Muslim should be skilful in his religion, and he can reach such level through continuous reading and studying. That is why this Surah is named “The Pen” and that is why it was the second Surah to be revealed, right after Surat Al-Alaq in which Allah’s first word to Muhammad was “Read”. How can we claim to be part of this *Ummah*, the *Ummah* of “Read” and how can we spread its religion without being committed to reading and studying?

Surat Al-Haqqah, (The Inevitable) = The Day of Judgment =

This Surah comes to you with a stack of information about how you can call your brothers and sisters, and all the people around you to Islam. *Al-Haqqah* is one of the names of the Day of Judgment. Reminding people of this day is one of the most important means you can use to soften the hearts of others and awaken them from their slumber. You see in it the horrors of facing The Subduer, **“That Day shall you be brought to Judgment, not a secret about you will be hidden.”** (TMQ, 69:18). The Surah then moves swiftly to the destiny everybody will have after the records have been handed out, **“Then as for him who will be given his Record in his right hand will say: ‘Here! Read my Record! Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my account!’ So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing. In a lofty Paradise...”** (TMQ, 69:19-22).

You can taste the sweet victory and imagine the happiness in this person’s eyes when reading this ayah. Why can’t you be like him? Why don’t you tell others to follow the same pattern?

On the other hand, we see, **“But as for him who will be given his record in his left hand, will say: ‘I wish that I had not been given my record! And that I had never known how my account is! Would that it had been my end (death)! My wealth has not availed me; My power (and arguments to defend myself) have gone from me!’ (It will be said): ‘Seize him and fetter him; Then throw him in the blazing Fire. Then fasten him with a chain whereof the length is seventy cubits!’”** (TMQ, 69:25-32).

Wonderful ayahs! The contrast between the two cases is quite sharp! Note, however, that paradise is mentioned first. The meaning is: entice people first with paradise and then warn them against hell; incentive is far more effective than intimidation.

Surat Al-Ma'arij, (The Ways of Ascent) = The Importance of Worship, besides Manners =

Surat Al-Qalam tells us about the traits of those who perform *Da'wa* whereas Surat Al-Ma'arij tells us about the other side aspect of their personality: worship. All those who call to Allah should combine both good manners and regular worship; not sacrificing one for the sake of the other. The Surah gives us some wonderful ayahs describing the devout worshippers, **“Verily, man (disbeliever) was created very impatient; Irritable (discontented) when evil touches him; and niggardly when good touches him. Except those who are devoted to prayers. Those who remain constant in their prayers; and those in whose wealth there is a recognized right, for the beggar who asks, and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth, (and his means of living has been straitened). And those who believe in the Day of Recompense...” (TMQ, 70:19-26).** **“Such shall dwell in the Gardens (i.e. Paradise), honored.” (TMQ, 70:35).**

We can see that they are the very same traits mentioned in Surat Al-Muminun (The Believers). As if we are being asked: What is your status among the believers? How far you still are you from the questions raised by the 28th part? Did you strengthen your faith and increase worship before calling others to Allah?

On the other hand, let us not misunderstand the meaning to be: you can't carry on *Da'wa* until your faith is complete. Ibn-Taimiah (may Allah Bless him) said something very wise about this, “Let not any of you say that he will not call to Allah until his faith is complete. In that case he will be bound to one of two options; either a day will come when he will think that his faith is complete, that is when he is been led astray. Or he will die without completing his faith.”

What is the solution then? Allah says what can be translated as, **“You (believers) are the best of peoples ever raised up for mankind; you enjoin *Al-Ma'rûf* (i.e. Islamic Monotheism and all that Islam has ordained) and forbid *Al-Munkar* (polytheism, disbelief and all that Islam has forbidden), and you believe in Allah.” (TMQ, 3:110).** The solution is for you to carry on *Da'wa*, to work on your manners and strengthen your faith; all at the same time. This does not conflict with carrying on *Da'wa*. On the contrary, calling to Allah and guiding people to the right path will help you in your worshiping and in maintaining good manners.

As we can see, the first four Surahs of this part tell us about the traits of those who carry on *Da'wa*: knowing about Allah, having skills in science and knowledge, believing in the Day of Judgment and using that for incentive rather than intimidation together with a big share of worshiping and manners. After this introduction we move on to Surat Nuh. This Surah presents to us a model of success in performing *Da'wa*.

Surat Nuh (Noah) = An Account of How to Perform *Da'wa* =

The Surah starts with the divine duty that this great Prophet was assigned, **“Verily, We sent Nûh (Noah) to his people (saying): ‘Warn your people before there comes to them a painful torment.’”** (TMQ, 71:1). Then it moves to describing Prophet Nuh’s life as a person performing *Da’wa*. Let us examine together the aspects of his missionary work and learn from this Prophet how to have a sense of being protective towards the religion of Allah. Let us learn the art of *Da’wa* as it should be.

The dedication for *Da’wa*:

We learn about how a truly dedicated person performs *Da’wa*, **“He said: ‘O my Lord! Verily, I have called to my people night and day.’”** (TMQ, 71:5).

Why is night mentioned before day? Do we normally perform *Da’wa* at night? This ayah tells us that Nuh (AS) used to call to Allah night and day without a break. To him it was a twenty-four-hour mission. However, his people's denial defiance was so intense, **“Yet all my calling led to nothing but (their) flight (from the truth).”** (TMQ, 71:6). Nevertheless, he never stopped his call, **“And verily, every time I called unto them that You might forgive them...”** (TMQ, 71: 7). See the use of the word “every time”. It tells you how persistent he was, **“And verily, every time I called unto them that You might forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, covered their faces up with their garments, and persisted (in their refusal), and magnified themselves with pride.”** (TMQ, 71:7).

Despite his people's rejection, Nuh was persistent in performing *Da’wa*, **“Then verily, I called to them openly (aloud). Then verily, I proclaimed to them in public, and I have appealed to them in private.”** (TMQ, 71:8-9). It was like he was saying, "I've tried all the possible ways; I've spoken with them privately; I've held conferences to explain my ideas, I've addressed them in groups and individually; I've tried it all!" However, **“none but a few believed with him,”** just as it was in Surat Hud. According to some scholars only 60 believed with him. Imagine! That is almost one believer every 15 years! What kind of obstinate denial is this? What kind of dedication and persistence in *Da’wa* is this?

Surat Nuh emphasizes an important aspect of *Da’wa*: Keep on performing *Da’wa* even if nobody responds. Take Nuh (AS) as your model.

The art of *Da’wa*:

The Surah continues goes on describing the methods used in of *Da’wa*, **“I said (to them): ‘Ask forgiveness from your Lord, verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance, And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers.’”** (TMQ, 71:10-12).

In these ayahs, Nuh (AS) gives his people glad tidings that, if they respond to Allah’s call, this will be for their own good in this life, not just in the hereafter. It is as if he is telling them, "Don't you love this world? Aren't you attached to it? Then ask for Allah's forgiveness so your lives will flourish."

Then he tries another method, **“What is the matter with you, that [you fear not Allâh (His punishment), and] you hope not for reward (from Allâh)? While He has created you in (different) stages. See you not how Allâh has created the seven heavens one above**

another, and has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lantern?” (TMQ, 71:13-14).

I can almost hear you all saying, "‘This is exactly like Surat Al-Mulq, and the importance of knowing Allah and glorifying him so we could call others to him...” Yes; look at the intricate coherence of the Surahs! Then what else?

“And Allah has brought you forth from the (dust of) earth¹². Afterwards He will return you into it (the earth), and bring you forth (again on the Day of Resurrection)?” (TMQ, 71:17-18). This is a reminder of death and the Day of Judgment; the same objective of Surat Al-Haqqah. Look again at the intricate coherence. Surat Nuh is giving us a practical account of the meanings discussed in the previous Surahs of this part.

The cause of extinction:

Prophet Nuh explains, in his statement, the reason for his people’s denial, **“Nûh (Noah) said: ‘My Lord! They have disobeyed me, and followed those whose wealth and children gave them nothing but loss.’” (TMQ, 71:21).**

As we can see, the problem is universal; preoccupation with wealth and children. It is the same problem discussed in Surat At-Taghabun, **“O you who believe! Verily, among your wives and your children there are enemies for you (who may stop you from the obedience of Allah); therefore beware of them!” (TMQ, 64:14).**

The Surah concludes with a supplication. This is intended to teach us that, for those who perform *Da’wa*, personal effort and endeavor to achieve their aim should always go hand in hand with supplication and turning to Allah, since He (*SWT*) is the One who guides us.

“My Lord! Forgive me, and my parents, and whoever enters my home as a believer, and all the believing men and women. And to the *Zâlimûn* (polytheists, wrong-doers, and disbelievers) grant them naught but destruction!” (TMQ, 71:28). Look how the circle of supplication gets wider as it moves from the believer, to his parents and acquaintances, then to all the believers; men and women. Indeed, a great Surah and a great account for anyone performing *Da’wa* to extract lessons and useful examples.

Surat Al-Jinn (Jinn) = Those Performing *Da’wa* from Another World =

The 29th part then introduces us to another group performing *Da’wa*: the jinn. An extraordinary one indeed! The Surah is almost asking you, "Aren't you jealous of them?" How can the jinn respond to the call and convey it while you are oblivious and totally detached from it? Listen to Allah saying what can be translated as, **“Say (O Muhammad - SAWS): ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn listened (to this Qur’an). They said: ‘Verily, we have heard a wonderful Recitation (this Qur’an)! It guides to the Right Path, and we have believed therein, and we shall never join (in worship) anything with our Lord (Allâh).’” (TMQ, 72:1-2).**

¹² Tafssir At-Tabari.

Why can't you be like them? Why don't you take them as an example to follow?

Listen to how they challenged the disbelievers among the jinn, especially *Iblis* (Satan), **“And that the foolish among us [i.e. *Iblis* (Satan) or the polytheists amongst the jinn] used to utter against Allah things which were enormously false.”** (TMQ, 72:4). Look at how they renounced the evil deeds of the jinn and the humans alike, **“And verily, there were men among mankind who sought refuge in the males among the jinn, but they (jinn) increased them (mankind) in sin and transgression.”** (TMQ, 72:6). This latter ayah is a warning against trying to take refuge in the jinn. Those who do so will be more miserable than they were. Listen, brothers, this warning is from the jinn themselves. They are warning you against taking refuge in them or seeking their help.

More ayahs follow, all showing us their wisdom and their understanding of the concept of *Da'wa* and how important it is, **“And indeed when we heard the Guidance (this Qur'an), we believed therein (Islamic Monotheism), and whosoever believes in his Lord shall have no fear, either of a decrease in the reward of his good deeds or an increase in the punishment for his sins. And of us some are Muslims (who have submitted to Allah, after listening to this Qur'an), and of us some are *Al-Qâsitûn* (disbelievers - those who have deviated from the Right Path). And whosoever has embraced Islam, then such have sought the Right Path.”** (TMQ, 72:13-14).

We see here words very similar to those used by Nuh (AS), that *Iman* (faith) will be of benefit to us in this world as well as in the hereafter, **“If they (non-Muslims) had gone on the Right Way (i.e. Islam), We (Allah) would surely have bestowed on them water (rain) in abundance.”** (TMQ, 72:16).

The connection between both Surahs is very obvious; both of them teach us the *Fiqh* (science) of *Da'wa*, its importance and methods of performing it.

Surat Al-Muzzammil (The One Wrapped in Garments) = Your Provisions and Supplies =

Here too, the objective is quite obvious from the start, **“O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad - SAWS)! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little.”** (TMQ, 73:1-2). You, who are trying to call others to Allah, you will get your spiritual supply from: *Salat al-Qiyam* (the vigil night prayer). Why? Carrying on *Da'wa* is a very tough mission indeed, **“Verily, We shall send down to you hefty Words (i.e. obligations, laws).”** (TMQ, 73:5). What has *Salat al-Qiyam* got to do with all that? **“Verily, the rising by night (for *Tahajjud* or *Qiyam* prayer) is very hard and most potent and good for governing oneself, and most suitable for (understanding) the Words (of Allah).”** (TMQ, 73:6). This *Salat* makes men, and builds up those who perform *Da'wa*, and divide their daily agenda days into two parts; *Da'wa* in the morning and worship at night, **“Verily, there is for you by day prolonged occupation with ordinary duties. And remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion.”** (TMQ, 73:7-8).

Then the Surah mentions Musa (AS) and the Pharaoh, **“Verily, We have sent to you (O men) a Messenger (Muhammad - SAWS) to be a witness over you, as We did send a Messenger [Musa (Moses)] to Fir'aun (Pharaoh). But Fir'aun (Pharaoh) disobeyed the Messenger [Musa (Moses)]; so We seized him with a severe punishment.”** (TMQ, 73:15-16). What has Musa and the Pharaoh got to do with the core idea of this Surah?

Salat al-Qiyam (Night Prayers) is our first shield against tyrants and obstinate disbelievers, as in the case of Musa (AS) and the Pharaoh. It is as if we are being told to pray at night to be stronger and more capable of *Da'wa* in the morning. A very clear formula is presented to us in Surat Al-Muzzammil. The Surah concludes with what we can translate as, **“Verily, your Lord knows that you do stand (to pray at night) a little less than two thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and also a party of those with you. And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to pray the whole night, so He has turned to you (in mercy). So, recite you of the Qur’an as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you sick, others traveling through the land, seeking of Allah’s Bounty, yet others fighting in Allah’s Cause. So recite as much of the Qur’an as may be easy (for you), and perform *As-Salât (Iqâmat-as-Salât)* and give *Zakât*, and lend to Allah a goodly loan. And whatever good you send before you for yourselves (good deeds), you will certainly find it with Allah, better and greater in reward. And seek Forgiveness of Allah. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.”** (TMQ, 73:20).

Night prayer was an obligation on all Muslims during the secret call to Islam, and continued to be so for quite a year after Islam was proclaimed openly. Then it became difficult for the companions to perform this prayer, so the last ayah was revealed to lessen this obligation. It came to say what can be translated as, **“So, recite of the Qur’an as much as may be easy for you.”** (TMQ, 73:20).

It is significant that in this Surah we read what can be translated as, **“...yet others fighting in Allah’s Cause.”** (TMQ, 73:20). This Surah is Makkan and was revealed at the beginning of the Makkan era yet it mentions *Jihad* for the sake of Allah. This is because the night prayer is among the prerequisites of preparing for *Jihad*. Use it to get ready for *Jihad* when the time comes.

Surat Al-Muddathir (The one enveloped) = Arise and Warn =

After you have taken your spiritual provisions and supplies and after you have known the One you will call others to and have seen wonderful examples of those performing *Da'wa* to Allah, after you have acknowledged the reality of the hereafter and learned about it, what are you doing then? Why are you standing still? **“Arise and Warn”** (TMQ, 74:2). This Surah is urging you to move, to rise and take action by performing *Da'wa*.

“O you (Muhammad - SAWS) enveloped in garments! Arise and warn! And magnify your Lord (Allah)!” (TMQ, 74:1-3). This Ayah does not mean that you should just say, “Allahu Akkbar” (Allah is the Greatest). It is urging you to let others know the magnificence of Allah, to let the whole universe magnify Him so that the commandments of Allah can be more important in your heart than anything else.

It is especially notable in this Surah that the ayahs are very swift in pace and effect. In Surat Al-Muzzammil the ayahs were simple and slow. They suited the atmosphere of night-time, **“O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad - SAWS)! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little.”** (TMQ, 73:1-2) and **“And remember the Name of your Lord and devote yourself to Him with a complete devotion.”** (TMQ, 73:8).

In Surat Al-Muddathir, on the other hand, the ayahs move more rapidly to keep pace with the swift actions of those who undertake *Da'wa*, and fill the universe with their vitality and vigor their optimism and interaction with the others, **“Arise and warn! And magnify your Lord (Allah)! And purify your garments! And keep away from *Ar-Rujz* (the idols)!”** (TMQ, 74:2-5).

“Then, when the Trumpet is sounded (i.e. the second blowing of the horn), truly, that Day will be a Hard Day - Far from easy for the disbelievers.” (TMQ, 74:8-10). Look at the magnificence of the Qur'an! The pace of these ayahs suits the objectives and the core ideas of the Surah.

Listen to what can be translated as, **“As if they were (frightened) wild donkeys. Fleeing from a hunter, or a lion, or a predator.”** (TMQ, 74:50-51). In these ayahs we see the disbelievers fleeing from the right path like wild donkeys trying to escape from a ferocious lion. What an incredible metaphor to suit the swiftness and rhythm of the ayahs.

= Surat Al-Qiyamah (The Resurrection) =

This Surah, as its name implies, reminds us of the Day of Resurrection. Just like Surat Al-Haqqah, it provides those who will perform *Da'wa* with the basic resources to use while leading others by the hands to the right path. This is especially evident in the way it reminds us of the initial stage of the hereafter: Death. Allah says what can be translated as, **“Nay, when (the soul) reaches to the collar bone (i.e. up to the throat in its exit), and it will be said: ‘Who can cure him (and save him from death)?’ And he (the dying person) will conclude that it was (the time) of parting (death)’”** (TMQ, 75:26-30).

= Surat Al-Insan (Man) =

This Surah explains one of the most important concepts to all those who want to undertake *Da'wa*. This concept is: All you have to do is *Da'wa*, as for the results, you leave them to Allah. That is why we see Allah saying what can be translated as, **“Verily, We showed him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful.”** (TMQ, 76:3). This Surah is almost saying to all those performing *Da'wa* and their Prophet (SAWS): Don't give up because some people disbelieve or deny you, Allah is One who guides, **“Therefore be patient (O Muhammad - SAWS) with constancy to the Command of your Lord (Allah, by doing your duty to Him and by conveying His Message to mankind), and obey neither a sinner nor a disbeliever among them.”** (TMQ, 76:24). It also says, **“Verily, these (disbelievers) love the present life of this world, and put behind them a heavy Day (that will be hard).”** (TMQ, 76:27).

= Surat Al-Mursalat (Those Sent Forth) =

Surat Al-Insan asked those performing *Da'wa* not to be troubled by other people's denial of their call, this Surah addresses a direct warning to those deniers, **“Woe that Day to the deniers (of the Day of Resurrection)!”** (TMQ, 77:15). At the same time it tells those performing *Da'wa* not to be distressed, to seek the means and leave the results to Allah, the Lord of all worlds, **“Then in what statement after this (the Qur'an) will they believe?”** (TMQ, 77:50).

These Surahs are extraordinarily superb in the way they talk about *Da'wa*. Although we were not able to discuss all the principles and concepts related to *Da'wa* that were mentioned in these Surahs, we have tried to shed some light on the key points in *Da'wa* and its significance, leaving the whole arena open for the reader of the Qur'an to live with the Surahs and feel the endless grace and blessings of this Holy Book, in affirmation of the Prophet's Hadith, "Its wonders (the Qur'an) are endless"¹³.

¹³ Narrated by Ibn Hajar, *Al-Kafi Al-Shafi*, 53.

Surahs of the Thirtieth Part

Conclusion:

This part concludes both the Qur'an and the methodology of "Vicegerency" on earth, as set up by Allah to the whole of mankind. Having discussed the rules and the laws, having talked about the ancestors and taken them as examples, and having mentioned the prerequisites of Vicegerency in entire Surahs and parts, we come now to the thirtieth part which is composed of several short but very impressive Surahs. This part emphasizes the meanings that can help the reader apply the whole methodology : from urging us to believe in the greatness of Allah (SWT) and His abilities, reminding us that we will meet Him and return to Him on the Day of Judgment, to asserting the necessity to remember Him and thank Him.

Surat Abasa (He Frowned) = A Reproach for the Sake of Allah =

In Surat Abasa we read the tender divine reproach given to the Prophet (SAWS) for turning away from a blind companion (Abdullah Ibum-Maktum) who came to ask about a certain issue. At the time the latter came, the Prophet (SAWS) was talking to some of the chiefs of Quraysh. Therefore Allah revealed what can be translated as, **"He (The Prophet - SAWS) frowned and turned away, because there came to him the blind man (i.e. 'Abdullâh Ibn Umu-Maktûm). And how can you know? He might become pure (from sins). Or he might receive admonition, and the admonition might profit him?"** (TMQ, 80:1-4). These ayahs teach us that *Da'wa* is a right of everyone and not just limited to certain categories of people. We have to learn that anyone seeking to learn any issue within the scope of *Da'wa* is indeed entitled to know it, no matter what his social stature might be.

It is worth mentioning that the Prophet's attention to the chiefs of Quraysh was neither because of their high social standard, nor out of contempt to the blind man. It was only because he thought these chiefs would have benefited Islam more had they joined its fold. He (SAWS) wanted them to become Muslims for the sake of Islam, not because they were rich. In this respect, the reproach came to remind him (SAWS) not to ignore anyone asking about Islam. This was intended also to teach those performing *Da'wa* to consider all people, rich or poor, young or old, without any discrimination.

Surat At-Tariq (The Night-Comer) = The Creation and the Command are His =

This Surat reminds us of our own reality and origin, **"So let man see from what he is created! He is created from a fluid gushing forth, proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs. Verily, (Allah) is Able to bring him back (to life)!"** (TMQ, 86:5-8). Man is created from a mere drop, originating from the backbone of the male and the ribs of the female, the same way a drop of rain brings a plant out from the soil, **"So let man see from what he is created! He is created from a fluid gushing forth, proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs. Verily, (Allah) is Able to bring him back (to life)!"** (TMQ, 86:11-12).

The Creator of mankind and the Creator of the universe is but One. He created man, just like He created the plants, from water in which He put the secret of life.

Surat Ash-Shams (The Sun)
= Your Fate is with Your Creator =

This Surah gives an account of the cosmic phenomena that were created by Allah for the sole use of man, the most important and honored creature, **“By the sun and its brightness. By the moon as it follows it (the sun). By the day as it shows up (the sun’s) brightness. By the night as it conceals it (the sun). By the heaven and Him Who built it. By the earth and Him Who spread it. By the *Nafs* (a person or a soul), and Him Who perfected him in proportion;”** (TMQ, 91:1-7). Then the Surah stops at the (*Nafs*), or the soul to describe it and show its importance, **“Then He showed him what is wrong for him and what is right for him. Indeed he succeeds who purifies his own self (i.e. obeys and performs all that Allah ordered). And indeed he fails who corrupts his own self (i.e. disobeys what Allah has ordered by rejecting the true Faith or by doing evil deeds).”** (TMQ 91:8-10). If only human beings had realized their value the way their Creator sees it, they would seek to answer their Lord’s call, they would then love Him as He loves them.

Surat Ad-Duha (The forenoon)
= How Much His Lord Loved Him =

In contrast to the reproach in Surat Abasa, this Surah shows us how much Allah loves His Prophet Muhammad (SAWS), **“By the forenoon (after sunrise). By the night when it darkens (and stands still). Your Lord (O Muhammad - SAWS) has neither forsaken you nor hates you.”** (TMQ, 93:1-3). Don’t think, Muhammad, that your Lord has deserted you or that He does not love you!

“Did He not find you (O Muhammad - SAWS) an orphan and gave you shelter? Did He not find you unaware and guided you? Did he not find you poor and made you rich (self-sufficient)?” (TMQ, 93:6-8). These are very tender words of endearment, filled with divine love for the Prophet (SAWS).

Among the blessings of this Surah is that Allah swore at the beginning by the two most serene times of the day: the forenoon and the night. The love of Allah for his Prophet is not just limited to words then; it has exceeded that to depict a whole emotional atmosphere as shown in the tender words and ayahs of this Surah.

Surat At-Teen (The Figs)
= You are the Best, on Condition... =

We almost see this same meaning in Surat At-Teen, **“By the figs, and the olives. By Mount Sinai. By this city of security (Makkah). Verily, We created man in the best stature (form).”** (TMQ, 95:1-4). What have the first three ayahs got to do with the creation of man? This Surah identified three holy locations; land of the figs and olives; Jerusalem, Mount Sinai where Allah spoke with Musa and Makkah. All of these places are sanctified, holy shrines. After that, Allah speaks about the creation of

man in the best form and shape. It is as if we should understand the meaning as: The sanctity of the human being, for Allah, is equal to the sanctity of these holy places. Sanctify yourselves, human beings, by obeying Allah and thanking him for creating you in the best form and mold, or else, **“Then We reduced him to the lowest of the low.”** (TMQ, 95:5). Nothing will save you from this destiny except *Iman* faith and good deeds **“Save those who believe (in Islamic Monotheism) and do righteous deeds. Then they shall have a reward without end (Paradise).”** (TMQ, 95:6).

Surat Al-Alaq (The Leech-Like Clot)
Surat An-Nasr (The Help)
= Safeguarding the Deeds =

In this part there are two Surahs; one of them was at the beginning of the revelation, namely Surat Al-Alaq, **“Read! In the Name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a leech-like clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he knew not.”** (TMQ, 96:1-5), and the other lamentably announced the news of the Prophet’s death in Surat An-Nasr (The Help) towards the end of the revelation, **“When there comes the Help of Allah (to you, O Muhammad against your enemies) and the conquest (of Makkah).”** (TMQ, 110:1). The latter was revealed before the death of the Prophet, bringing him glad tidings about the eventual glory and the victory of Islam, **“And you see that the people enter Allah’s religion (Islam) in crowds. So glorify the Praises of your Lord, and ask His Forgiveness. Verily, He is the One Who accepts the repentance and Who forgives.”** (TMQ, 110:2-3). What is the relationship between asking for Allah’s forgiveness and the victory of Islam and the greatness of the Muslims? A victorious person might be filled with conceit or arrogance, as we have seen with many victorious leaders and conquerors throughout the centuries. That is why it is important to thank Allah the Giver for His blessings and ask Him to forgive us for our lack of appreciation. These two things will not only safeguard our deeds from being lost, but will also safeguard our hearts from conceit and tyranny.

The slogan of the faithful:

That is why we see that in Islam, forgiveness always comes after great deeds. After praying we say, “I ask for the forgiveness of Allah, the One and Only, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, and to Him I repent”¹⁴. Through this Surah Allah teaches us that we should always give Him full credit for any blessings we get and blame ourselves for failing to ask for His forgiveness. Nobody will ever be able to counterbalance the Lord of all Greatness for what He properly deserves.

Surat At-Takathur (The Piling-up)
= Balancing between materialism and spiritualism =

Surat At-Takathur introduces us to a very important concept: We shouldn’t live only to satisfy the physical needs of our bodies. We shouldn’t live only for food, fun and marriage. We have to take care of our spirits as well. We have to be careful in case

¹⁴ “*Astaghfiru-llah Alladhy La Ilaha Ila Huwa, Al-Haiul-Kayum, wa Atubu-illaih.*”

money and children might distract us from remembering Allah, then we would find ourselves confronted by death. **“The mutual rivalry (for piling up of worldly things) diverts you, until you visit the graves (i.e. until you die).”** (TMQ, 102:1-2). The Surah then warns those who live only for their self-indulgence and their physical desires, **“Nay! You shall come to know! Again nay! You shall come to know! Nay! If you knew with a sure knowledge (the end result of piling up, you would not have been occupied yourselves in worldly things). Verily, You shall see the blazing Fire (Hell)!”** (TMQ, 102:3-6). Don’t be one of those.

Inside you, you have a spirit that yearns for its own food; obedience, forgiveness, praying and *Qiyam*. If you ignore this warning then listen to this horrifying ayah about Hell, may Allah save us all from it, **“And again, you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then on that Day you shall be asked about the delights (you indulged in, in this world)!”** (TMQ, 102:7-8). Allah (SWT) will ask us about every blessing He bestowed upon us, the most important of which are our bodies. Some of us have used the latter in disobeying Allah, forgetting to nourish our spirits to prepare them for the Day of Judgment.

Surat Al-Asr (The Time) = The Solid Cemented Structure =

Next we come to Surat Al-Asr, the Surah that was described by Al-Imam Al-Shafei (RA) as follows, “If nothing of the Qur’an was revealed except this Surah, it would have sufficed the whole of humanity.” This Surah covers all the features of Islam, in what can be translated as, **“Except those who believe (in Islâmic Monotheism) and do righteous good deeds...”** (TMQ, 103:3). Then it stresses the importance of unity among Muslims, their cooperation to bring victory to this religion and their patience in overcoming all the obstacles that face them, **“...and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience.”** (TMQ, 103:3). Anybody who is not following this path is a loser, **“Verily, man is in loss, except those who believe...”** (TMQ, 103:2-3). This path is indeed the right path; the path that we ask Allah to guide us to in every *Raka’a* we pray, **“Guide us to the Straight Path. The Path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the path) of those who earned Your Anger (i.e. those who knew the Truth, but did not follow it) nor of those who went astray (i.e. those who did not follow the Truth out of ignorance and error).”** (TMQ, 1:6-7). Those who have earned Allah’s anger are losers and those who have strayed are also losers, but those who recommended one another to the truth and to patience are those on whom Allah has bestowed the blessing of guidance to the right path.

Making nations and civilization:

In this Surah there are very important themes. It has compiled all the assets required for making nations and civilizations such as:

- Caring about the value of time **“By the time.”** (TMQ, 103:1).
- Occupying our time with useful things, **“Except those who believe and do righteous good deeds.”** (TMQ, 103:2).

- The importance of team-work, **“and recommend one another to the truth, and recommend one another to patience.”** (TMQ, 103:3).

If the *Ummah* realized the meaning of this Surah, it would raise its awareness and all the assets of its civilization consequently would increase.

Surat Al-Feel (The Elephant) = The Weak Plots of the Worthless =

This Surah tells us that this whole universe belongs to Allah. It tells us that Allah is capable of punishing every tyrant in every time, **“Have you (O Muhammad - SAWS) not seen how your Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant? Did He not make their plot go astray?”** (TMQ, 105:1-2). The plotting of Allah’s enemies is weak. It has no real effect and it would not last for long because Allah’s might will stand in its way, **“And He sent against them birds, in flocks, striking them with stones of *Sijjil* (baked clay). And He made them like (an empty field of) stalks (of which the corn has been eaten up by cattle).”** (TMQ, 105: 3-5). Seek Allah’s help against His enemy and yours.

Surat Quraysh = Never get used to the blessings =

Then we come to Surat Quraysh. This Surah discusses a very serious problem: getting used to Allah's blessings and taking them for granted, to the extent that some people might forget to thank Allah for them. **“(It is a great Grace from Allah) for the protection of the Quraysh, (And with all those Allah’s Grace and Protections, We cause) the (Quraysh) caravans to set forth safe in winter and in summer (without any fear).”** (TMQ, 106:1-2). They became accustomed to one of the great blessings of Allah; the safe road prepared by Him for their winter and summer journeys. Such blessings should have been answered with gratitude and worshipping Him, **“So let them worship (Allah) the Lord of this House (the *Ka’ba* in Makkah), (He) Who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear.”** (TMQ, 106:3-4).

The greatest blessings of Allah and the most basic needs of human beings are food and safety. Surat Quraysh says to those who read the Qur’an, “revive your hearts by remembering the blessings of Allah, and beware not to get used to them, since this distracts the hearts from thanking Allah the Bestower.